

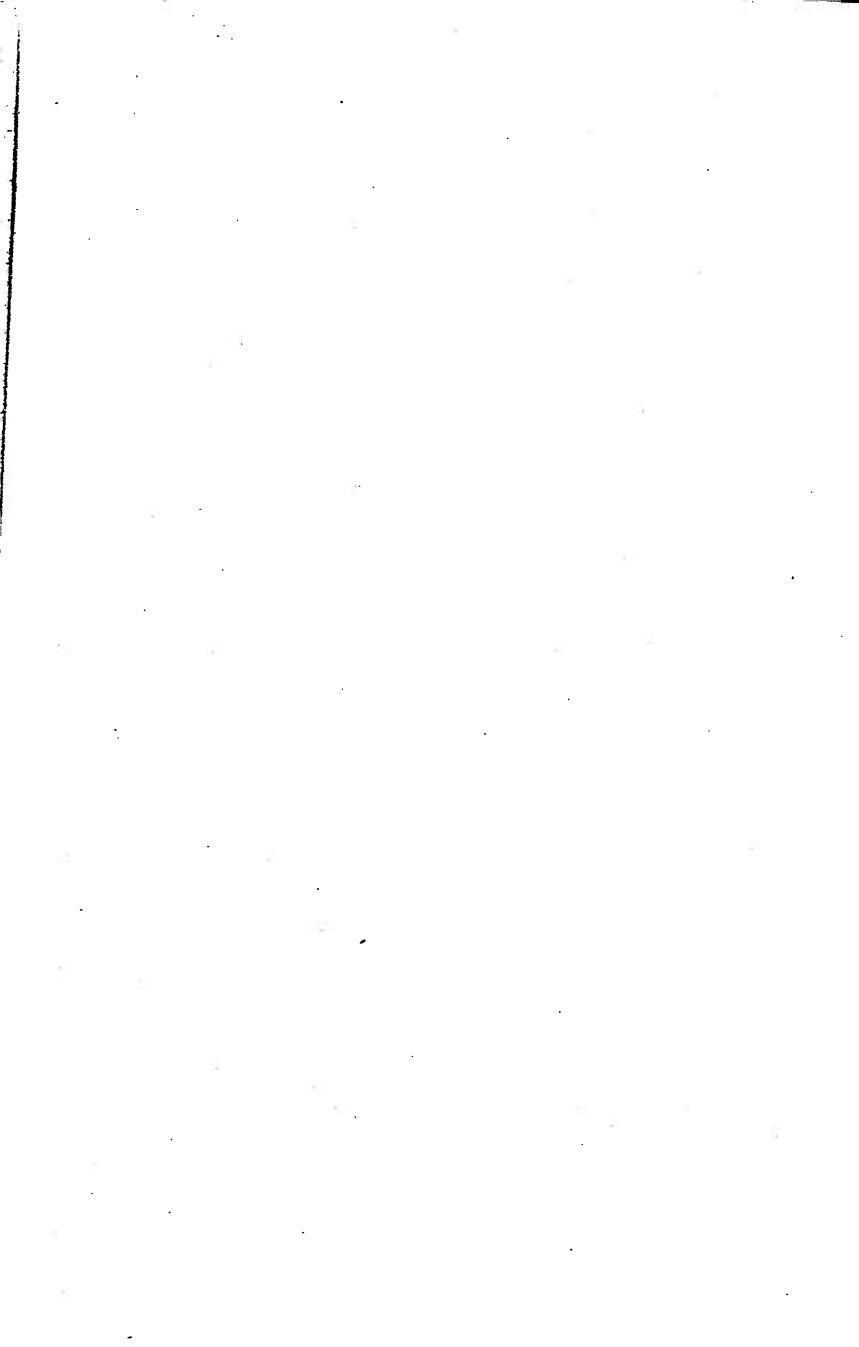
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THE LIFE OF SERVICE

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SOME CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES FROM PAUL'S
EXPERIENCE IN THE EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS

BY

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**TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
WHO WENT HOME
WITH THE EIGHTH CHAPTER OF
ROMANS
AS THE LAST WORD FROM
THE BOOK
BEFORE MEETING THE LIVING WORD "FACE TO FACE"**



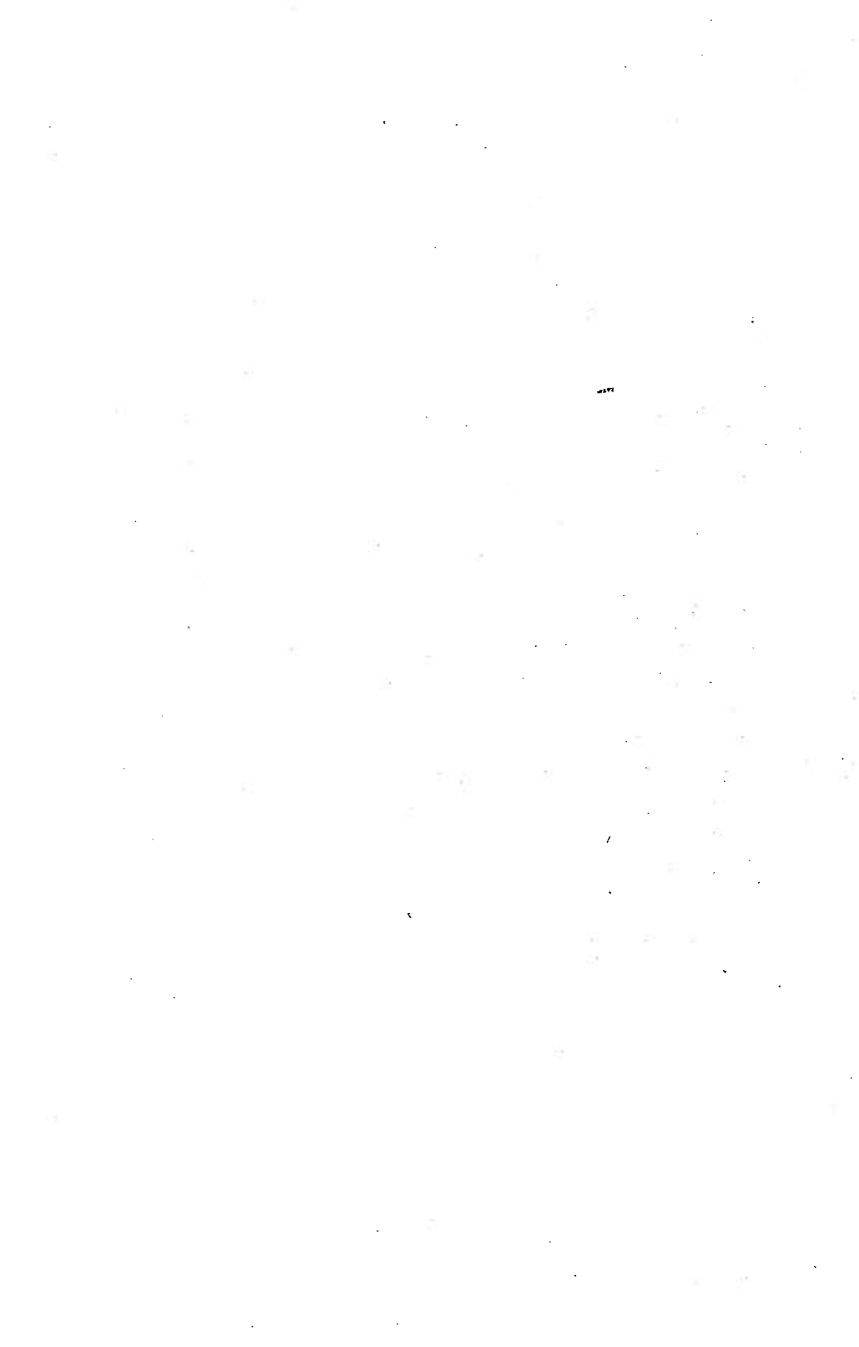
FOREWORD

THE chapters which follow are a series of addresses delivered by the author at the General Conference of Christian Workers, held at East Northfield, Massachusetts, August, 1917. They do not in any sense attempt a systematic study of doctrine, or even a treatment of all the doctrines presented by Paul in the doctrinal portion of the Epistle to the Romans. They are merely suggestive, and rather an effort to dwell on certain aspects of Paul's spiritual experience, and show how his doctrinal views, especially as stated in the Romans, were an expression of his experience.

To divorce doctrine from experience in the average Christian is calamitous. It is to empty experience of strength and to sap doctrine of life. How much more calamitous it must be to study the doctrines Paul taught apart from the life he lived, to divorce his creed from his service!

J. I. V.

NASHVILLE, TENN.



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I

**THE MOTIVE OF A GREAT LIFE—PAUL'S
PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF**

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,
separated unto the gospel of God.” —ROMANS 1:1.

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians;
both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me
is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome
also.” —ROMANS 1:14, 15.

I.

THE MOTIVE OF A GREAT LIFE—PAUL'S PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF.

THE key of the epistle to the Romans is stated in the opening words,—“ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.” This is Paul’s autobiography. It is the portrait of the great apostle by himself. It is the title by which he desires to be known. It is the rôle he is ambitious to play. He is careful to paint but a single feature into the portrait: it is that of service. Paul announces himself “ a servant of Jesus Christ.” And so the epistle to the Romans might be called the creed and program of “ a life of service.”

The book answers two big questions: first, what a servant of Christ should believe; and second, what a servant of Christ should do. In thus presenting the creed and program of Christian service, the epistle divides itself sharply into two parts, the first eleven chapters dealing with Christian doctrines, and the remaining five with Christian duties. The doctrinal part of the book, opening with the announcement of “ Paul a servant of Jesus Christ,” closes with a sublime ascription to the servant’s Master: “ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Paul was an enthusiastic servant. His Master was his hero. Paul states his highest ambition when he

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says: "Whose I am and Whom I serve." The duty part of the book, which is immediately preceded by this sublime ascription, opens with a conclusion that lays all life on the altar: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." The man who steps out in the opening line of the doctrinal part of the book as a servant, here in the opening line of the duty part of the book proclaims his vocation as that of service. The key word of the doctrinal half of Romans is "servant," and to the duty half is "service."

In the chapters which follow, the effort will be to present some Christian doctrines from Paul's experience as revealed in this great epistle. Our study will thus be confined to the first or doctrinal portion of the book, leaving untouched the more practical, and to many perhaps the more interesting, portion. Even with this limitation, I can hope to do little more than touch on some of the fundamental doctrinal beliefs in the creed of Christ's servant. I shall try then to assemble out of this wonderful letter to the church in the chief city of the ancient world some of the big convictions of a life of service, some of the articles in the creed of a man who wrote himself not into the history of a nation or an age, but into world life and history, by the way he served God and humanity.

In this opening chapter we are to consider the motive or driving power in a life of service. What is the motive of a great life?

Paul salutes the church in Rome, and says: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." He tells them how proud he is of them, and says: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." He tells them of his profound concern for them, and says: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." He tells them how homesick he is to see them, and says: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gifts, to the end ye may be established."

And then, before he knows it, he has given himself away. He has laid his life bare and open before them. He has named the thing in his great soul that cuts to the bone. He says: "I am debtor." There is the motive that drove his life. There is the dynamo that ran all his tireless activities. There is the life motor which furnished the power to hand and head and heart.

LIFE STIMULATED BY MOTIVE.

Life is to be estimated by its motives. It is not to be estimated by its pretensions. Pretensions are cheap. They are not as a rule sincere. They make claims based on fictitious assets. The world has long since ceased to give anything but scorn and contempt to pretense.

It is not to be estimated by professions. It is easy

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to profess. It takes no red blood. It calls for no sacrifice. It demands no Golgotha. Profession need not dig deeper than the skin into a man's life. We would rather people would profess less and practice more.

It is not to be estimated even by aspirations. It is a fine thing to aspire. It is a great thing to lift your face to heaven, and long to enter in. But aspirations may be sordid. It may be selfish. It may be the ambition of a small soul out for nothing under God's heaven but its own betterment.

It is not to be estimated chiefly by its products, by its actual output, by its deeds, for we want to know what is back of a man's deeds. It is not what he does, but why he does it. He may be doing a thing that is fine in itself, but if his motive is yellow, his deed is soon streaked with yellow. He may seem to be heroic, but if he is prompted by considerations that are base, his motive blackens and defames his deeds.

It is the motive that is the unerring and infallible barometer of life. What is your motive? Why are you doing what you do? Why are you seeking what you seek? What sustains you? What drives you? What is the thing that digs down to the bone in your soul? You have given yourself away when you have named your motive, for your motive is the dynamo that drives your life.

This is the way we estimate everything else. If you want to take the measures of an automobile, you do more than examine the upholstery and look at the paint and measure the wheel base. You lift

the hood and scrutinize the engine. That throbbing, driving thing there tells the story. The size of the motor is the size of the car, and what the motor is to the car, motive is to life. If you want to take the measure of a train, you must do more than count the coaches and photograph the crew. You must lay your hand alongside of the engineer's on the throttle, and get the tonnage of the locomotive. It is the thing that pulls the train that rates it, and what the throttle is to the train, motive is to life. If you would estimate a factory, you must do more than count the machines and investigate the payroll and inspect the grounds. You must visit the power house. The size of the plant is the size of its power, and what the power house is to the factory, motive is to life. The size of your motive is the size of your life.

Therefore, Paul gives himself away when he names his motive. He lays bare his soul. What will such a man say about a thing so supreme? His career was geared to the highest man-power that ever drove a life. Paul was one of the greatest men the world has known. Some consider him the greatest, and rank him next to that matchless One Who was divine as well as human. Surely it is worth while to discover his secret, to get at his explanation. Here it is. "I am debtor." That was all. It was quite sufficient. "I am debtor," and therefore all the rest.

What does he mean? How did he get in debt? What have his creditors ever done to place him under a life obligation? Most of them have never

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seen him. They have never heard him. They know nothing about him. They are not concerned that he make payment. Then why is Paul so loaded down with debt? It is perfectly evident. He feels that he has what the world needs. He has come into possession of a blessing that must be shared; not because the world has ever done anything for him, but because he is where he can do something for the world, Paul harnesses his life to the matchless dynamic of service, and says: "I am debtor."

MOTIVE BORN OF EXPERIENCE.

And so Paul lifts his motive out of a life experience. He is not saying this because he cherishes certain altruistic sentiments, or entertains certain theories of ethical culture. He could stand with the best in these, but debt was more than an academic question with Paul. It was a thing that broke in on him in his biggest mood. It was a conviction inwrought into the very fiber of his life. It was something he had learned, not at school nor by observations, but in an experience that shook his life to its foundations. What was that experience?

Paul's life motive was not born of humanitarianism. Some get their motives there. They see what people need. They behold the woe and misery of the world, and feel that they can help, and that because there is need, they are debtors. Such debts are sometimes repudiated, especially when the beneficiaries of our humanitarian impulses turn against us.

It was not born of political or social expediency.

Some get their motive there. They feel that they have a theory that will save the world. If they can only get it accepted, all will be well. Paul felt that way about his gospel. But I think his motive digs deeper into his life than his estimate of the preciousness of the gospel, and his belief that it was the one thing that would save the world.

Neither was it born of any belief in his personal ability or fitness. Some are self-conscious of their powers of leadership. Some nations are obsessed with their own superlative culture, and feel called to make the rest of the world like themselves. Paul certainly had ability, but he was not conscious of it. Never was there a man more humble. He said he was not worthy to be called an apostle, that he was the least of all saints, that he was the chief of sinners. It was not because he felt himself to be a super-man that he said: "I am debtor."

His motive was begotten of a supernatural experience. Some do not like the word "super natural." I have never learned to get along without it. I have never been able to classify some things in any other way. They are so big that all vocabularies run out, and all phrases fall short. I am glad there are some things too big for the phraseology of the natural. Paul's life motive was born of contact with the eternal.

Let us follow him on his way to Damascus and see God halt him and blaze the light of heaven around his astonished spirit. Let us listen to the voice which said: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?," and to Paul's reply: "Who art thou,

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Lord?," and to Christ's answer: "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest." At last the unavoidable Christ fills the road and blocks the way. Paul sees the Crucified. He is face to face with the Hero of Calvary. Trembling and astonished, his great soul falls down in full and passionate surrender to Christ, and says: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The motive that is henceforth to master his life has been born.

Paul's conversion differed radically from that of the other apostles. They first came to know Christ as man, and slowly His godhood dawned on them. Paul first came face to face with Christ as God, and instantaneously His glorious deity flashed on him in all its mighty and compelling power. In a sheet of blinding glory light, Paul had a revelation of what he owed, not to his nation or age, not to society or civilization, but of what he owed to One Who loved him and died for him. Then and there his great soul surrendered to its supreme life motive, and he said: "I am debtor. What things were gain to me, those I counted lost for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!"

Elsewhere he describes his motive in somewhat different language, but in words which mean the same. In one place he says: "The love of Christ constraineth us." What he means, of course, is that he had gotten such a conception of the Savior's love that his whole life is dominated and controlled by obligation to Christ. In another place he says:

PAUL'S PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF 21

"I could wish myself accursed for my brethren," but it is more than nationalism that is playing on his soul. It is more than patriotism. It is a passionate yearning that Christ may see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

THE DRIVING POWER OF THIS MOTIVE

Let us try to form some estimate of the driving power of this motive in Paul's life. Let us consider how it widened his horizon. He says: "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." He seems to say: "I am more than a Jew. I am a citizen of the world." He has become a cosmopolitan, an internationalist, because he has caught Christ's world vision. Being a debtor to Christ, he must see what Christ sees. He must be concerned for those for whom Christ is concerned. He must take on his heart the burdens which rest on Christ's heart, and on his shoulder the load Christ carries. He must spend and be spent to do everything anywhere Christ wants done.

Let us consider what it summoned him to endure. He never broke down before anything. He felt that wherever he went, bonds and imprisonment awaited him. But he was not disturbed. It was a part of the debt he delighted to pay. One night he is in jail with Silas. He is spending the time singing. He is not unhappy. He is paying the debt he delighted to pay. He is doing something for the Hero of Calvary. He is shipwrecked. He is stoned. Read the catalogue of his trials in the

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eleventh chapter of second Corinthians. He was ready for anything. His motive never drew back before any cross. He had seen Christ's cross, and all other crosses were small.

Let us think of what this motive enabled him to achieve. Follow him in his missionary journeys. He never seemed to rest. Wherever he went he organized churches and was ever seeking out individuals. There was never a stale moment in his life. He was never at a loss for something to do. He said: "I am debtor," and that slew every dull, stale hour of life. See him in those pagan cities. Watch him at Ephesus. Why does he not throw up his task? Why does he keep on trying to stay that tide of licentiousness and idolatry? It is because he is debtor. See him in Athens. Listen to his great oration. And then hear the drivel of the crowd as they make comment on his speech. Why does he cast his pearls before swine? Why does he throw himself away in an impossible venture? It is because he is debtor. See him in Jerusalem. Surely they will regard him in his own city. But here his treatment is most cruel. The mob try to kill him, and with difficulty the officers flee with him to a place of refuge. Hear them as they ride through the night to keep the prisoner from being killed. Why does Paul keep on? It is because he was debtor. He never wavered on any battle line.

It was this motive into which he dipped his pen when he came to write the larger part of the New Testament. What would the New Testament be without Paul's contribution? He says: "I am

debtor," and writes on, and there is no stain on his message. You can trust a man who writes with that motive behind his pen. Paul has earned the right to say as he draws near the close of his career: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day." Yet he also says: "I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is as if he entered the very gates of heaven, sped across its shining portal by the same motive which drove him on earth. I fancy he is still serving his glorious Lord, and if some celestial questioner were to ask why, he would get the old answer: "I am debtor."

THE MOTIVE OF A GREAT LIFE

This is the motive of a great life. I grant you people sometimes do big things from other motives, but they would be bigger if done from the best motive. There is something better than gain, than reward, than personal happiness. There is something better than heaven. It is service. "I am among you as one that serveth." There is where we get near to God, and where we get like God.

"I am debtor," not because people have done anything for me, or ever can. They may not know me. They may never know me. I am debtor because I have been blessed, because I have something they need, because there are hungry people in the

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world, and I have a loaf of bread, because there are thirsty people, and I can give them a cup of water, because there are issues that need championing, and I have a life to devote, because my country needs me, and I have something I can lay upon its altar. Because of all this, I am debtor. But this is not all. It is not even much.

Because One loved me and gave Himself for me, I am debtor. We must get the supernatural element into our life if it is to be really great. If we are to get hold of more man-power, we must have more than the power that is found in humanitarianism, or in political and economic enthusiasm, or in the exploitation of personal ability. We must get some of the divine power which Paul felt when he said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We must have a sense of debt that piles up before the cross. How it piles up there!

This is pre-eminently the Christian motive. It is the thing that must drive the men and women who are to save the world. Nothing else will do it. Nothing else will last long enough, will lift high enough, will drive hard enough. "I am debtor."

THE NATION'S MOTIVE

In a peculiar sense, it is the motive which is driving the nation to-day. Why is America at war? What has taken us in? Why have our sons enlisted? Why are the people of this nation placing life and property at the disposal of their country? America has not gone to war for anything that she can get

out of it. She is not driven by a lust for trade and power. She is not after territory or indemnity.

It is the old motive. We are debtors. We have something the world needs. It is not our wealth or our power. It is our freedom. This is a holy war because back of it is a holy motive. The mere fact that we are in a position to lend a hand loads us down with obligation.

A nation with such a motive is already victorious, for it is not what a nation does, but why it does it. No nation that lays itself on the altar of service makes a sacrifice that God can despise. America will come out of this war with a glory time can never dim.

THE CHURCH'S MOTIVE

In a peculiar and pre-eminent sense, it is this motive which must drive the Christian church in its world mission. Paul said: "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel." He felt that the gospel was what the world most needed. It was the best thing he knew anything about, and he felt that his supreme obligation was to proclaim it.

This is the supreme obligation of the Christian church in America. America has world obligations which she can neither evade nor repudiate. We will never meet these obligations so long as we withhold from other nations the one thing that has made us great, and by every test and measure that fair and far-seeing men can apply, that thing is Christianity. We can give the weaker nations opium, and they will curse us. We can give them up-to-date methods

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and weapons of war, and they may destroy us. We can give them the tools of industry, of education, and of commerce, and they may undo themselves. But if we will give them the gospel, it will save them. It will make them great and happy and useful.

What has been done for us increases our debt. What the gospel has done for us it will do for every other nation. The success of the gospel in non-Christian lands is the modern miracle. Wherever it has been proclaimed, it has proven itself to be "the power of God unto salvation."

Should the church repudiate its debt, it will not only discredit itself, but it will soon discover that it has adopted the most speedy method for its own decay. The only thing that will keep the church virile and sweet is to be everlastingly paying the one debt that never can be paid.

When Westminster Abbey was filled with a great throng to witness the coronation of King George, the archbishop arose and announced as the text for the sermon: "I am among you as one that serveth." There could be no brighter theme.

An official from Australia as he went from one of the great functions of that coronation late one night lost his way and found himself in a London alley. There on a doorstep he passed a lad holding a little girl on his knee, and the lad had taken off his coat and wrapped it around his little sister's body to protect her from the raw cold. This was what the visitor saw in the heart of the empire at midnight. It was the realization of the Westminster

message. It is what makes a nation great whether it be enshrined in king or street waif.

The motive of service is the great motive. Let theologies reconstrue themselves in harmony with this motive, and they will cease to be uninteresting. Let creeds get this driving power back of their dogmas, and the world will treat them with a new respect. There is nothing greater for either God or man than this—a life of service. Write me as one that serves.

II

THE REMEDY FOR A LOST WORLD— PAUL'S GOSPEL

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."—ROMANS 1:9.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."—ROMANS 1:16, 17.

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."—ROMANS 2:16.

II.

THE REMEDY FOR A LOST WORLD— PAUL'S GOSPEL.

A MAN reveals himself in what he writes. A book is the lengthened shadow of a human personality. The book of Romans in the New Testament is a revelation of the inner spiritual experience of St. Paul. It is a full length portrait of the great apostle. It is the greatest book Paul ever wrote.

Its theme is redemption, personal and social, individual and national, international and racial, for the Jew and the Gentile, for the Greek and the Roman, for the wide world and for all time. It is a great theme. Never did writer set pen to paper driven by a bigger theme. Never did thought fight for utterance in brain or on lip to tell a more enchanting story. How is man to be saved? How is human nature to be changed? How is the beast in man to be dethroned and the angel in man to be imprisoned? How are slavery and savagery and despotism, how are race hatred and caste and superstition and all that brood of hell that has broken loose on earth to be rounded up and destroyed? How is this lost world to be brought back to God? This is the story of Paul's greatest book written to the church in the chief city of the ancient world.

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His method is the gospel. He says he has no hope of either personal or social redemption, of either national or racial salvation, save through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here on the opening page of his greatest book he flies his flag and proclaims his creed. His announcement rings with defiance. It shouts with confidence. It soars like a challenge. It smites like a summons to battle. The man is aflame with his theme. He is what he says. He has cut all bridges behind him. He sees but one road before him. He wants none other. It is long enough and strong enough and straight enough and safe enough to take him to his goal. "For," says this man who feels that he is debtor to the world, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

THE AGE IN WHICH PAUL LIVED

To feel the full force of what he says, we must group about this statement the age in which it was uttered. It was an age that was spiritually bankrupt. Heathenism and Judaism were both decadent. Men had become disgusted with the polytheism of the Greeks and Romans until the intelligent people of that day not only rejected but ridiculed it. Skepticism was well-nigh universal. The two-pre-eminent systems of philosophy, the Stoic and the Platonic, were discredited. Stoicism inculcated blind resignation to unalterable necessity, and doomed men to an unconscious hereafter. Platonism befogged the common mind with a mythological sys-

tem that was incomprehensible, and promised what it could not accomplish, and created hopes it could not satisfy.

The situation among the Jews was no better. Their religion had degenerated into a dead formalism. Three schools promised, but not one performed. The Pharisees were ritualists. The Sadducees were skeptics. The Essenes were mystics. They all broke down before the evils of the day. Not one of them had a restraint strong enough to stay the tide that was running toward ruin. Not one of them could furnish an inspiration splendid enough to make men hope.

Into this world, spiritually bankrupt, into this age of despair, into this state of society whose attitude toward life was an alloy of skepticism and superstition, Paul comes with the gospel.

He was qualified to act before such a situation. By birth a Jew, by birthplace a Roman, by natural gifts a capable leader, by education one of the foremost scholars of his day, and by training, travel, and association a cosmopolitan, Paul was fitted for both the negative and positive side of world leadership. He could rout the Stoic and the Platonist on their own ground. He had traversed the sterile paths of the Pharisee and the Sadducee and the Essene, and knew that they led nowhere. He was the one man of that spiritually bankrupt age with an asset, fitted by nature and experience to lead the world, if only he can find the road that leads to life.

And now he declares he has found the road. He

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discovered it that day on the way to Damascus when a voice from heaven halted him in his blind career of bigotry and hate, and a celestial hand touched his sightless soul with a vision of the truth. There in that mystical experience of his conversion he met a Savior, and found and felt a power that could redeem the world. He has something that will lift the pall of despair which hangs over the race, something which will slay its skepticism and superstition, which will lay a hand of restraint on its animal excesses, and rebuke its damning follies, and star with fadeless and immortal hope the destiny that had gone bankrupt. It is the gospel of Him Who was crucified on Calvary's cross. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

In the remaining portion of this first chapter, he arraigns the Gentile world at the bar of its own experience, and shows how it has gone from bad to worse in the effort to save itself by its works. Then in the second and third chapters, he turns to his own people, the Jews, and convicts them of a course as calamitous. With these two spectacles of world failure to find redemption in any of the philosophies or systems of the day before them, he summons men with increasing confidence to the cross of Christ, and expounds his gospel.

PAUL'S CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL

Without a fear, he flings himself out on his age, in the confident affirmation that the gospel will save the world. He stakes everything on this faith, and

he has much to stake. He is no parvenu, no disinherited adventurer, no cheap religious prompter; never did any man give up more for his cause than Paul gave up when he espoused the gospel.

He sacrificed nationalism. He became an outcast among his own people. Wherever he went, he found himself branded. The Jews hated him. They felt that he was disloyal, apostate, a traitor. To the Jew there was no deeper hell. In no people has the spirit of nationalism been so strongly developed. What persecutions they have endured rather than be disloyal to Israel! You can read the story in the outrages that have been heaped upon them for centuries in well-nigh every country of the world. You can find this story of persecution wherever the Jew has gone. It was hard for Paul to face the reproach of turning his back on his own people. He did face it. He sacrificed nationalism.

He gave up his professional prospects. He was the first man of his nation. He was already high in influence and position, the coming man of his country. He might have had anything the people could give him of place or power, or honor, fame, or property. But he turned his back on it all, and went out despised, persecuted, hated, branded.

He surrendered personal ease and safety. "I have called thee to suffer," was the word which met him on the threshold of his work. Bonds and imprisonment awaited him wherever he went. He was a wanderer on the face of the earth. Read the recital of his trials and hardships. He does not write as one who complains, but rather as one who

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boasts. He is not cast down. He is elated. See him as he lifts his head and says: "I am an ambassador in bonds. All things are mine. What things were gain to me, those I counted lost for Christ." It was not an empty boast. Watch him as he makes good his boast. Follow him from city to city. See them as they stone him and scourge him and drag him outside the town and fling his body on the ash heap and leave him for dead. He is not disturbed. See him in shipwrecks and imprisonments. He is not anxious. He has a great conviction. It is that this gospel for which he suffers the loss of all things is worth the price.

The boldness of his venture is enhanced when we consider how the gospel was then despised and scorned. A cross was then a term of reproach. It is very different now. Things have changed. There are centuries of vindication on the side of the gospel. There are eras of progress and campaigns of victory. The foremost nations of the world have espoused the gospel. The leaders of the race give their homage to Christ. It requires no great courage to be a Christian now, but the tide was all the other way then. It did not daunt Paul. Despite all it cost him, and in the face of all the ridicule and reproach with which a scornful and skeptical age greeted the cross, he says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

HIS CONFIDENCE NOT MISPLACED

Paul made no mistake. The gospel justified his confidence in it. As he went up and down the earth

proclaiming the message, the people stopped to listen, and if they listened long enough, they threw away their old gods, and knelt at that blood-stained cross. Wherever he preached it, the gospel flourished and bore fruit. In wicked cities Christian churches were organized. In centers of caste and hate and greed, love began to cast its spell. Good will started to climb toward the throne. The beauty of holiness appeared. The ghastliness and ghoulishness of vice and sin unmasked, and men began to say to each other: "After all there is something worth living for."

Individual character was rehabilitated. It was seen that "Christ has power on earth to forgive sins." Hardened consciences were made tender. Enfeebled wills were recharged with power. Faith took the place of doubt, hope of despair, and love of greed. The gospel began to do what the systems of the Stoics and Platonists had been powerless to do, what the ritualists of the Pharisees and Sadducees and Essenes were unable to accomplish. It began to recreate human nature.

Society was changed. People began to treat each other better. Slavery was challenged. It was a long time before it was destroyed, but it was doomed the day it was challenged. As the gospel was preached, men began to say: "We must respect the image of God in the face of our fellowmen." "We must not treat human life as a chattel. We are brothers." "We must bear each others' burdens." Loads grew lighter, and the day brighter, and the way easier

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for the tired and lonely and desolate in a world that had all but ceased to hope.

Governments were changed. It was a bad day for despots when the gospel began to be preached. Slowly but surely the movement got under way which was to sound the doom of tyranny and absolutism. As the gospel was proclaimed, the worth of the individual was discovered, and with his worth, his rights. Might ceased to be a synonym of right, and force was discredited as a method of civilization. Thrones crumbled, republics sprang up, and there was an open door and a place in the sun for the world's weakened poor wherever the gospel was preached.

And the gospel has spread. The marvel of its progress is the wonder of the world. Its numerical progress is nothing short of a miracle, but more significant is the invisible and permeating progress of its ideals. It is like leaven, like light. Nothing can stop it. No power on earth can prevent the progress of the gospel. As well try to chain down the sun, to lasso the stars, to halt the incoming tide, to reverse the seasons, to dam a river.

The gospel has vindicated Paul's faith in it. He was big enough to see what was in the gospel from the start, before all this had come to pass. Without a fear he championed the cross, and proclaimed the gospel as the only redemption for the individual and society. If he could say then: "I am not ashamed of the gospel," how much more could he say it now? If, as he stood back there amid the ruin of society and the despair of a race that had

gone on the rocks, facing a colossal task and leaning on a despised and condemned cross, he could say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel," with what bounding confidence and holy enthusiasm he could say the same to-day!

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD.

The gospel is the hope of the world. It is the only hope. It is the all-sufficient hope. It is the hope of the individual. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." It is doing its work before our eyes to-day. It has lost none of its power. We do not need to go back to ancient history. One might believe in Christ for what He did. He cannot but believe in Him for what He does.

It is the hope of society. Society will never be saved with systems of philosophy or rituals of worship or political and economic theories. The road is strewn with the failure of these things. There is needed more than law. Legislation is not so much a cause as it is an effect. Good laws are a by-product of redemption. Society gets better laws not to save people, but rather because people have been saved. Society must be saved from within. What if good laws are enacted and people remain devilish? It is the gospel of Christ that saves. It alone has saving power.

It is the hope of a new world. Sometimes we almost cease to hope for a new world. Things get so bad that we are in despair. But "the old order changeth, giving place to new." God is building a

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new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The new age is coming, the age of fraternity and peace, of security and brotherhood. It is coming not only after, but during the war. Barriers are being broken down, and hoary iniquities are losing their grip, and everything good is getting a firmer footing in this world.

Paul's creed is the creed for the times and world in which we live. The gospel was never more needed than right now. It never challenged the situation with more commanding confidence. I am not depressed over the problems and disturbances of our day. They do not discredit the gospel. They demand it. They create its peerless opportunity. It alone can meet the issue.

The men who are needed for these times are men who can face the situation as Paul did that dead age in which he dwelt. The rebuilders of society must be believers in the gospel. They must attack the problems of the age with unwavering faith in the cross. This is no time for skepticism, for shallow specifics, for the empty blatherings of new thought. It is not a theory the world needs now. It is power, and a lot of it. It is power enough to drive society up hill. You will find such a moral dynamo in the gospel, and in the gospel alone, for the gospel is not the power of men, but the power of God.

The men who face the future with this dynamic of redemption must be those who have experienced its power in their own lives. Paul was not quoting from the pages of a book when he said: "I am not

ashamed of the gospel." He was writing out of his heart. He had dipped his pen in his life blood. He knew what he believed, because he knew Whom he believed. What the world needs to-day is a man who has been to Calvary, to whom the cross is not a decoration, but an incarnation, and who can say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God in my own life!"

III

THE ATONEMENT—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

7

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. But if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—ROMANS 5:6-10.

III

THE ATONEMENT—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

THE fifth chapter of Romans presents Paul's doctrine of salvation. The historical background of this doctrine, painted out of Paul's experience as a Jew, is given in the fourth chapter. The theological name for the doctrine is "atonement." It is Christianity's crowning doctrine. Take it out, and the gospel is hopelessly mutilated. It is central, essential, fundamental,—so much so that as long as one holds firmly and Scripturally to the atonement, he may be allowed large liberty in other things: so much so that if he should cut loose from the atonement he will find himself hopelessly adrift. The glorious fact with which it has to do is the sheet-anchor of the sinner's hope, and the anchor holds in every storm. Some years ago a man wonderfully gifted went up and down the land preaching to great crowds and swaying multitudes with the spell of his marvelous personality and matchless gifts. Discerning people, however, noticed that the atonement had no place in his preaching,—in fact, he himself later announced his rejection of it. Soon his splendid ministry went into eclipse. Later he became an obscure lecturer in a Western town, ministering to a small group

of religious faddists. Later still he recognized his mistake and publicly proclaimed his faith in a gospel that is fatally defective without the atonement. No man can hope to lead others out of the dark who begins by putting out his own light.

The atonement is Christ's supreme achievement. It is the big fact in His personal ministry for man's redemption. It sums up in a word the Savior's saving merit, and puts Jesus in a class altogether by Himself. There are innumerable religions. Anyone who cares to do so may start a new one. But there is but one gospel, for there is but one religion with a Savior. There are countless religious leaders and teachers. Anyone may adventure that rôle who can satisfy himself with its perquisites. But there is but one religious leader and teacher who is a Savior, for there is but one who has made atonement and who has power on earth to forgive sins.

Notwithstanding the fact that the atonement is Christianity's crowning doctrine and Christ's supreme achievement, it has been assailed as has perhaps no other feature of the gospel.

They say it is a bloody doctrine, and therefore repulsive to refined sensibilities, that its ethical features belong to a raw age, and that its imagery shocks culture. Maybe so, but sin, with which the atonement deals, is a hideous thing. Sin may veil its features, but the veil cannot change its black heart. Despite all our progress and culture, a lie is no more ethical now than in the days of Ananias and Sapphira. Adultery is no more moral in the twentieth century than when David, to sate his lust,

stained his hands with Uriah's blood; and murder is no whiter now than in that primal hour of the world's dawn when Cain slew his brother Abel. Let us not become too snivelingly sentimental. Let us not smother our beliefs with perfumes. The atonement is a doctrine of sacrificial blood, but when we learn the efficacy of the blood, it will not offend us. It will enchant us. We shall not shun it. We shall sing it.

"There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains."

Paul must have felt this way, or he would never have written this fifth chapter of Romans, especially that part of it in which he says: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

They say that the idea of a vicarious sacrifice is unreasonable, that it is a fiction, and that every man must answer for his own life. So he must, and so he does, when he can, but when he cannot, what then? When a man is chained in a dungeon, it is folly to tell him to be free. What he needs is an emancipator. Vicarious suffering is not unreasonable. It is one of the commonest facts of life. All about us are people and things suffering for other people and things. You see it in the family, where the mother suffers for her child, where a daughter

sacrifices her young life for her invalid mother. You see it in the garden, where one flower withers that others may bloom. You see it in a harvest field. You see it in a bird's nest. You see it a thousand times a day. It is the thing which saves life from savagery, this thing which says: "No, you are not able. Let me take your place." You are seeing it along the world's battle lines. What are they doing there, if they are not laying down their lives for others? You do not have to explain the atonement to them. They are living it. And after this war is over, to the men who have been in the trenches it will not be necessary to defend this fundamental doctrine of our faith. It has been demonstrated to them in a glorious experience.

It came in the same way to the apostle Paul. He was writing out of his life, too, when he said: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." But the divinest manifestation of this great truth of vicarious sacrifice is in the atoning sufferings of Christ.

They say we have the teachings of Jesus, what difference does it make what we believe about Him? Let us eliminate all vexatious questions about the virgin birth, the miracles of His personal ministry, the atonement, and all that has to do with the supernatural, and confine ourselves to His teachings. Are they not enough? If we obey them, what more is needed? Ah, if we did but obey them! "Where-

fore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

A lad who sat beside his father at a prayer-meeting heard a man praying most earnestly to be good, to be useful, to be unselfish. The boy leaned over and whispered to his father: "Father, why doesn't he?" Why do not we obey the teachings of Christ? We need more than a knowledge of His teachings. We need the ability to obey. Christianity is more than Christ's teachings. It is Christ. His teachings are precious, but He is more precious. Can a love-letter ever take the place of a lover? Besides, we should never have had Christ's teachings had we not first had Christ, and had not Christ Himself been what He was and done what He did.

They say, why go further than the example of Christ? We know how He lived. He shows us how to live. Is it not enough to imitate Him? Yes, He shows us how to live, but He does far more. He enables us to live after the fashion of His life. To do that, one must be more than an imitator. He must be a reproducer. Life is the only thing that can reproduce. It is idle to tell a thorn bush to be an oak tree. The life of the oak must jump in its sap before it can imitate the oak. And so Jesus Himself must be formed in us if we are to imitate

Him. Therefore, Jesus is not only our example, but our Savior. Recently a ship in peril at sea sent out the wireless cry, "Save, O save!", and a dozen great ocean liners came speeding to its side to give relief. Suppose these big steamships had contented themselves with sailing around the imperilled vessel and giving it an exhibition of seamanship. Suppose they had, in effect, said: "Watch us and see how to handle yourself in a storm at sea. Imitate us." Their conduct would not have been the heroism of the high seas, but the infamy. Yet this is as far as some people get with Christ. If Jesus does nothing for us but set an example, He is not our Savior. He is our despair.

The biggest fact of Christianity is Christ,—not the church, not the Bible, not civilization, not the Christian, but Christ. Christ proves the Bible. He vindicates the church. He inspires civilization, and produces the Christian. I believe in the Bible because I believe in Christ. I have confidence in the church because I believe in Christ. I look for new heavens and a new earth because I believe in Christ. The biggest fact in Christianity is Christ, and the biggest fact in Christ is the atonement. He is the atonement. The atonement is His personal ministry for man's redemption. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,"

THE BACKGROUND OF THE ATONEMENT

In order to approach the atonement sympathetically, let us look for a moment at the background

set up for us in the ceremonial worship of the Old Testament, particularly in the customs incident to the observance of that greatest day in the Hebrew year, the Day of the Atonement. As a Jew all this was ingrained into Paul's experience. All the rites and ordinances of Jewish worship incline toward the great truth central in the observance of that day. It was my privilege a few years ago to be present for several hours in a Russian-Jewish synagogue of the most orthodox type, and witness their celebration of the Day of the Atonement. While much of what I saw seemed to me to be mere formalism, I noticed that the emphasis was still the ancient emphasis on a vicarious propitiation for sin, and renewed reconciliation between God and man.

The ancient observance was with great ceremony and impressiveness. From all over the land the people assembled. At the supreme moment of the service, when a holy hush as of the eternal world fell on the vast concourse, the high priest, who had already offered sacrifice for his own sins, approached that mystic inner shrine which he alone was allowed to enter, and he but once a year. Passing through the heavy curtains, he disappeared within the holy of holies, and was there face to face with the sacred symbols of the Divine Presence. When he emerged from that sublime contact, he took two sacrificial goats and laid on them the sins of the people. One was slain and offered on the altar. The other was taken far off into the wilderness and lost. The twofold act typified expiation and forgiveness.

This is the picture which is hung up in the Old Testament as a background of the atonement. It is an ancient tapestry into which inspiration has woven the symbolism of Christ's work on the cross. The day of atonement was a shadow picture of Christ's work, and the great truths pictorially presented there, Christ realized. He has opened up the holy of holies, so that any soul at any time may go straight to God. He has also suffered for sin and achieved forgiveness. This is the picture which was hanging in Paul's experience as he wrote: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

THE ATONEMENT ALL-INCLUSIVE

Christ's atoning work covers His entire career, and includes every fact of His life and ministry. We are disposed to confine it to His death. Undoubtedly He was atoning for us in His death. This is the meaning of Calvary. Calvary was vastly more than a spectacle of heroism. It was not the death of a victim, but the achievement of a Savior. It was the goal of Christ's earthly ministry. He died for sinners, but this is not all He did.

He lived for sinners, and His life was a part of His atoning work. We must get rid of our narrow theories of the atonement. No theory is big enough to hold that great fact. The Incarnation was a part of the atonement. Christ was making atonement when He taught, when He stilled the tempest, when He fed the multitude, when He healed the sick, when He had compassion on the crowd, when He wept with Mary and Martha, when He raised the dead, when He lay in the tomb and Himself arose. Through every thought and deed and word and plan and purpose and feature of His life, He was bringing God and man together.

Indeed, the atonement is timeless. Christ is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." His atoning work is the one thing Jesus has always been about. Widen your perspective. Get a vision of God's great plan. The atonement was a fact before ever sin was a reality. We are not to think of God as having blundered at creation, and as trying to recover Himself at Calvary. As you approach the country where the big mountains live, suddenly you discover that the skyline is broken, and yonder, thirty miles away, a splendid range lifts itself against the blue, and you exclaim: "Behold the mountains!" But what you see is just a foothill. Beyond, buried in the haze and banked against the far invisible horizon, rise range on range and peak on peak. There are lofty valleys and broad plateaus and dizzy heights which stretch and slope away toward the infinite. Not your foothill, but that great country of high heights and far ranges is the

mountains. So we sometimes sit down before Calvary and say: "This is the atonement." It is just a foothill that has emerged. All of Christ's earthly ministry banked around that cross. All His teachings, His miracles, His example, were there. But this is not all. Behind and beyond and above Calvary stretch the infinite features of the atonement, obscured by distance but not destroyed. We do not see them now, but some day we may, and then we shall begin to understand the meaning of the Scripture which says: "He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Then there will dawn on us the far meaning of Christ's cry on the cross: "It is finished!"

Whether or not we take in the far reaches of the atonement, we must be convinced that blessings accomplished on such a far plan and by such measureless sacrifice are the most precious God has to bestow.

THE BENEFITS OF THE ATONEMENT

Insofar as we are able to apprehend them, the benefits of the atonement may be named in two words.

The first is expiation, or propitiation, or satisfaction. We may regard this as the divine side in the application of the atonement. I am free to say there are features connected with it which puzzle me, but I accept it because it is undoubtedly taught in the Bible. It is there in the divine economy of grace. It is the aspect of the atonement that seems to be given most prominence in the Old Testament.

Christ paid our debt. He suffered in our stead. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He took upon Him our sins, and suffered the just for the unjust. He suffered in the sinner's stead, and because of His expiatory work, God can be just and at the same time justify the unjust. "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift: for if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offense, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

This is the gospel for the sinner, for a soul at the great straits. Leave this out, and there is no gospel left. We ministers are frequently sent for to comfort some soul with a wicked, wretched, wasted past, and for whom the light is dying fast in the west. What shall we say at such a time? Shall we proclaim the beatitudes, and preach the beauty and worth of a life of high ideals and unselfish service? There is no gospel in that for a man who is dying, and whose past has been wasted. I remember once I was called to see a Scotchman who was dying of tuberculosis. Climbing a filthy, quaking stair to a hall bedroom on the second floor, I entered a room in which I felt you could almost cut tubercular

germs with a knife. The room was in a most unsanitary condition, and on a cot lay a man with an awful cough, with sunken cheeks and hollow eyes, in the last stages of consumption. He told me that he had run away from home when a boy, and that, although his old parents in Scotland had been pious people, he had lived a wild and reckless life. He said he wanted me to help him get home. Supposing that he wanted to get back to Scotland, I asked him if he was a member of the St. Andrew's Society, and how much money he would need. He then told me that I did not understand him,—that what he wanted was for me to show him how to get saved. Then I realized that he was talking about his "long home." What was I to say to him? He had lived a wicked life, and he was dying. Should I talk to him about Christ as an example? Should I try to expound to him the ethics of Jesus? I told him the old story of a Savior Who died for sinners, Who paid the penalty on Calvary's cross. And I saw the fear fade out of his face, and the look of peace come into his eyes, and I heard him say he was happy. I went out of that shabby tenement walking on air, for I had seen once more the greatest of all miracles come to pass. I had seen a soul saved by the atoning merit of a crucified Redeemer.

The second word is reconciliation. It is an incident of the first. The atonement becomes reconciliation because it is expiation. Reconciliation is the human side of the atonement, if we may say the atonement has a human side. It is that aspect of the atonement to which the New Testament gives

prominence. It is the way the New Testament translates atonement,—“through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Who is to be reconciled? Not God, for He has never been alienated. The atonement is not a scheme to make God love us, to secure His friendship, to capture His esteem. Sometimes it is so regarded, but it is not the view of the atonement which comes to us out of Paul's experience. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The notion that God is a fierce, enraged, vindictive Deity, and that Christ died on the cross to tame His savage moods and allay His animosities toward the sinner is a hideous slander of the atonement. It is pagan rather than Christian. God has never needed to be reconciled to the sinner, for He has never been alienated.

He has Himself instituted reconciliation proceedings. “God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.” “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God's love is not the product, but the cause, of the atonement. It is not sequence, but motive. And God's love is changeless. Nothing the sinner can do can make God stop loving Him. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is eternal, timeless, changeless love. The Bible will be searched in vain for any satisfactory support of the theory that the atonement is a scheme to solace the wrath of an angry God. On the other hand, there

is abundant Scripture to show that the atonement was an effort on God's part to reconcile man to God. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,"—notice it does not say: "For if, when God was our enemy, God was reconciled to us by the death of His Son." Did the Bible read that way, it would contradict itself. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,"—not "Himself unto the world"—and "you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death." It was not God Who was alienated, but the sinner.

The atonement is God's supreme effort to reconcile His alienated, wayward, and estranged children to Himself, to make them see that He is not an angry and vindictive despot, but a tender, loving, and compassionate Father. How is this reconciliation to be effected? Christ the Son stands up in the eternal council and says: "I will undertake to effect reconciliation," and so this becomes His mission from the foundation of the world, and in its accomplishment through the long ages He climbed to His vicarious sacrifice. In the tragedy of Christ's sufferings, there are three acts in which He discovers to man the heart of God.

He identifies Himself with us. "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able

to succor them that are tempted." Common trials and sufferings are the furnace fires which weld life. Christ meets us in those flames. His temptation was real. His sufferings were real. If not, they were wicked. We emerge from the fire with Him, as our brother, ready for any message He may give us. This is His message. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Next, He breaks the power and fascination of sin through suffering. Sin deceives us. Christ tears off sin's disguises, and shows us that sin is death. He takes the penalty up in His own life, and endures it. He agonizes in Gethsemane, and hangs in crucifixion and shame on a cross. Thus He saves us, not only from sin, but from sinning. The terrible thing about sin is not the suffering incident to it, but the fact of sin. The pain connected with disease is merely the danger signal which Nature gives that an enemy has assailed our health. Were there no pain connected with disease, it could do its deadly work undiscovered. And so the suffering incident to sin is merely a danger signal to show that an enemy has assailed the spiritual life. The worst thing about sin is sinning. Sinning is alienation from God. Christ breaks the power of sin, and by that act effects reconciliation. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Finally, He reveals God's love by suffering. "God commendeth His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

This is where the blood of the atonement delivers its message. The life is in the blood. The atonement is the story of One going the full length of sacrificing His life for an enemy. When we understand that, it is not possible for us longer to think of God as hostile. He must love us. He suffers with us. I once knew a mother whose wayward boy was about to be sent to jail for some crime he had committed. The boy did not seem to mind the disgrace, but the mother was in an agony of pain. She suffered far more than the boy. It was the vicarious suffering of a mother's love. It is this love which Christ reveals through His sufferings. And so by His cross He has slain the enmity,—not God's enmity toward us, for there was no such enmity to slay,—but our enmity toward God.

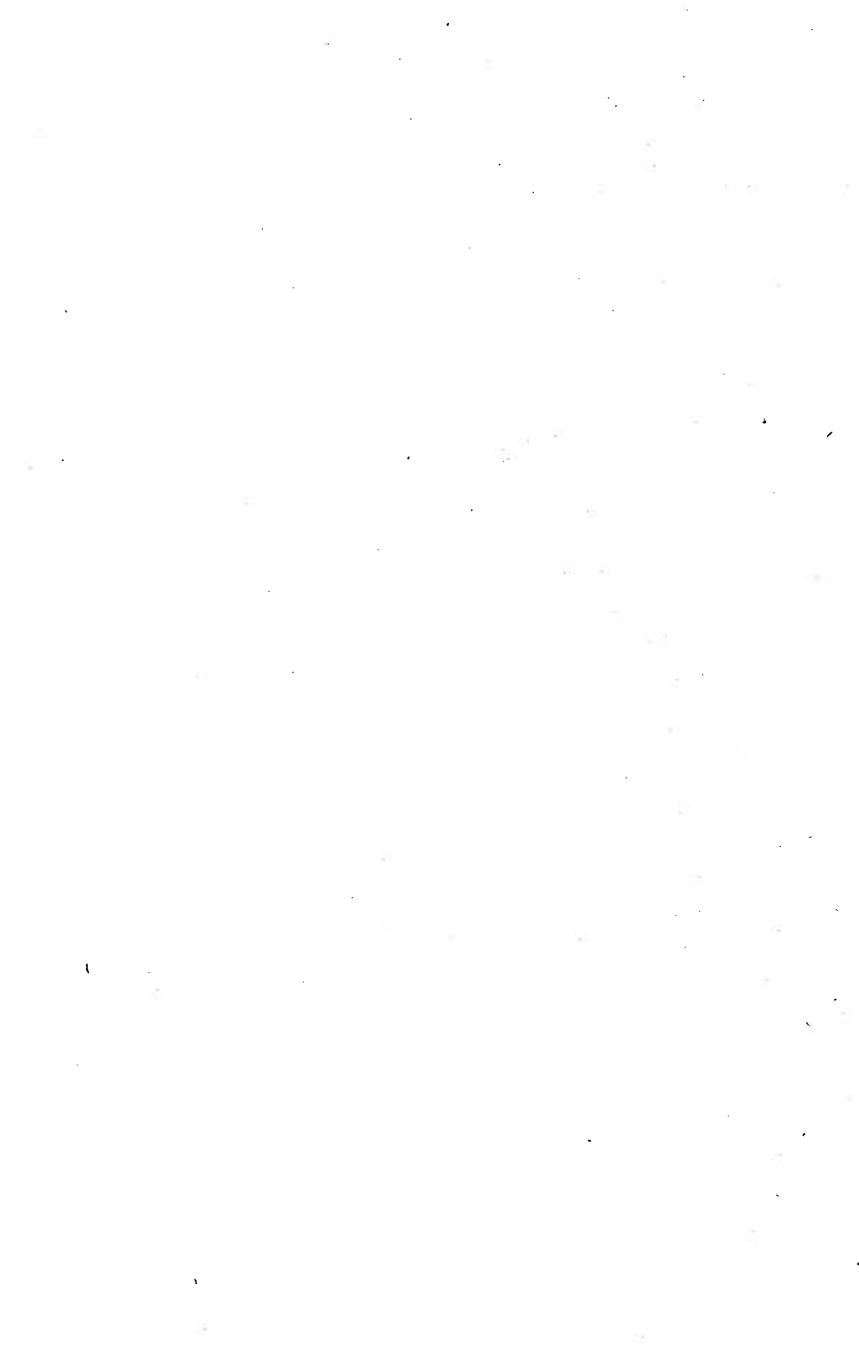
Thus Christ, through suffering, reconciles us to God. With nail-pierced hands He tears aside the disguises human fear had built between itself and God, and as we catch the vision thus revealed, the spirit in our hearts cries: "Abba Father!" At last we know that God is love. We lay down our arms against Him and surrender. We enlist in His service, and are saved.

THE MATHEMATICS OF THE ATONEMENT.

Someone may raise a question as to the mathematics of the atonement. He may ask: For what number and for what class did Christ die? Is the atonement limited or unlimited? Is it sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect? Such people are getting into the dogma of the atonement, and

dogma may not always be a blessing. Sometimes it may mean the eclipse of religion. It is certainly not always identical with religion. Dogmatic theology is the science of religion. Salvation is the experience of religion. Science is a thing that needs constant revision, but experience is timeless and permanent. Botany is the science of flowers. There have been many schools of botany, but each recurring spring "the flowers lift up the same fair faces; the violets are here." The Bible takes up the mathematics of the atonement in a grand way. It says: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is not a bottom to that,—no top, no rim, no end. It is measureless.

Our great concern connected with the atonement should be, not on whom it is bestowed, but by whom it is received. "Through whom we have now received the atonement." Have I received the atonement? Have I laid down my arms against God? Have I ceased to be an outlaw and become a citizen,—a prisoner, and become a child? Am I reconciled to God? Have I looked over the shoulder of the cross and seen my Father's face?



IV.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE WORLD— PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF SIN

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"—ROMANS 6:1.

"For he that is dead is freed from sin."—ROMANS 6:7.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."—ROMANS 6:12.

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."—ROMANS 7:21-25.

IV.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE WORLD— PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF SIN

IN the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Romans, Paul discusses the darkest fact in human experience—sin. Notice his approach to the subject. He begins with a question: "Shall we continue in sin?"

He seems to say: "I do not understand everything about this dark problem." Who does? How did sin ever enter God's world? Why did God permit it to enter? Why was He not there to bar the door? How could it enter if God be sovereign? Why does sin continue after it has been sentenced? How can it find a soil in which to grow and freedom with which to range? How can man ever get his consent to commit sin? What is sin's destiny? What pit of ruin and despair is it to dig somewhere in God's world before it is finally conquered and cast out? All these and other matters connected with sin, Paul does not attempt to answer. He is no dogmatist. He is just a seeker after truth and a searcher after life. And so he begins his approach to the darkest fact in human experience with the question: "Shall we continue in sin?"

He seems also to say that he wants us to think about it ourselves. He does not want us to dog-

matize, but to ponder, to reflect and meditate. Paul does not attempt to think for other people. He had his own convictions, and they were strong, but he did not attempt to impose his views on others. He wants people to reach conclusions, not because they are told that certain things are so, but because by their own reasoning and experience they have found them so. This is the fundamental position of Protestantism in its attitude to every religious question. The church is not your conscience. No institution nor priestly hierarchy can take the place of the individual will. Therefore Paul starts his discussion of sin with an invitation to his audience to think for themselves.

He approaches the problem only after he has suggested a solution. In the fifth chapter of Romans, we have the cure for sin. It is the atonement. That chapter starts with the statement: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and closes with the statement: "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." He takes us first to the cross to let us look on the face of the Redeemer, and to the fall to let us look on the face of sin. If there is a remedy, we need not be frightened by the disease. If sin can be conquered and cured, we can face it without a panic and discuss it without a fear. If our worst foe is doomed, we can smile at his threats and attack him with confidence. Since we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by Whom we have received the atone-

ment, we can with quiet faith approach the spectacle of a sin-sick, sin-cursed, sin-ruined world.

SIN A REALITY

Paul assumes that sin is a reality. He has found it so in his own experience. He is not discussing a myth. He is not treating an evil that exists only in his imagination. He is not asking a question about a thing for whose existence he has only hearsay. He assumes that sin is a fact that not only cannot be denied, but that is so widespread and conspicuous, so insidious and insistent, so unmistakable and unescapable, that no one will be bold enough even to call the fact in question.

He had not reckoned with certain theologians of a twentieth century school, with whom it is quite the fashion to reduce sin to a shadow. Men are saying to-day that the doctrine of sin is a lie, an insult to intelligence, a challenge to decency and culture. People do not sin. They simply make mistakes. They are the victims of circumstances. People do not intentionally and knowingly and on purpose do wrong. This is the rosewater that drips from the twentieth century sprinkling-pot on the pallid plants in the sterile garden of the new theology. We cannot get far with such an equipment.

"In vain we call old notions fudge,
And bend our conscience to our dealing;
The Ten Commandments will not budge,
And stealing still continues stealing."

Paul assumes that sin is a fact, which no sensible person will deny. Man is not a victim. He

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is a sinner. When a man does wrong, he does it not because he cannot help himself, but because he wants to do it. When he violates God's law, it is not because he is a creature of circumstances, but of evil inclinations. When he misses the mark and wallows in vice and rots in crime, it is not because there are no clean fields in which to wander, but because he deliberately prefers the sty.

Paul's vocabulary is not starred with such words as "environment" and "heredity." He uses a shorter and a stouter and a plainer word. He names a fact which locates itself not so much in circumstances and surroundings as personality, and where cure is to be found not in changing man's condition, not in abolishing poverty, not in giving man a new set of ancestors, but in taking him to Calvary, where he gets a new nature.

SIN RUINS THE WORLD

Sin is responsible for the ruin of the world. It is the fact which reaches its fruition in death. It is the destructive force in personality. The trouble with people is not that they are poor or stupid or friendless, but that they are sinful. Sin makes us unhappy. It brings down on us a tragic hour. It is responsible for suffering and sorrow, for disappointment and failure. If people would only do right! Sin wrecked the first Eden, and it has been wrecking Edens ever since. Paradise failed not because the flowers stopped blooming and the trees no longer bore their fruit, not because the birds ceased

to sing and the river in God's garden ran dry, but because man fell. He fell through sin.

Sin is the destructive force in human society. It is not our laws and institutions so much as our sins that keep the world sick. People must be changed if things are ever better. We have wars because there are certain kinds of people. The shadow of war is on the world because certain men in the position of leadership have allowed the old ambition which wrecked Eden to creep into their hearts. They have surrendered to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The world is plunged in blood because kings have yielded to the old lure with which Satan tried to tempt Christ when he spread the kingdoms of the world before Him and said: "All these will I give you if you will fall down and worship me."

Sin is the trouble with the world. It is back of every undried tear and every un comforted sorrow. Back of crime is sin. Back of the blackness and shame of vice, sin veils its fiendish face. Down beneath all the hell that flames and fumes with anguish and woe, sin feeds the fires of unrest. Therefore, if things are ever to be better, sin must be mastered. If happiness is to reign, sin must be slain. If heaven is to dawn, sin must be abolished. Across the face of our human hopes that long for happiness, there is one question we cannot evade: "Shall we continue in sin?"

PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF SIN

Let us get Paul's conception of sin. It is not

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static, but dynamic. He is not thinking of sin as a commodity, but as an experience. He is not thinking of sin as a theological dogma, but as an expression of personality. He is not thinking of sin so much as of sinning. "Shall we continue in sin?" That is, shall we keep on sinning?

It is therefore not so much the penalty as it is the fact of sin which fills him with horror. There are those who think only of the penalty. Sometimes it looks as though theology could not get further. It is absorbed with the consideration of a scheme to escape the penalty for sin, losing sight of the fact that if there were no sin, there would be no penalty. It is not so much that sin is punished as that sin punishes. It produces penalty. Its condemnation is automatic. We see a little of the penalty here. We fear more hereafter. Sometimes we feel that if we could only escape this penalty, we should be satisfied. But sin has a zone of calamity which no penalty can belt, and the dark fact against which Paul throws himself is not the penalty of sin, but the practice of sinning.

In the sixth and seventh chapters of this epistle, he pleads with men to cease sinning. His first plea is death. He says that salvation means that we are dead to sin, and asks: "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Then he paints a burial scene, which some mistake for baptism, but which is a portrayal of our union with Christ. "Planted together with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resur-

rection." We should quit sinning, because a dead line has been drawn between sin and Calvary's cross.

His second plea is life. If we are dead with Christ, we should also live with Him. If He has made us alive, we should live His life, not the life of sin. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." The life of Christ runs in your veins not to produce sin, but righteousness. Sin nailed Christ to the cross. It crowned Him with thorns and broke His heart. It wrung from His dying lips the cry of loneliness, and laid Him in the tomb. This is what sin did to Christ. Christ's life is in you not to produce the thing which crucified Him. Since you are dead with Christ, you are dead to sin. Since you are alive with Christ, you should live unto righteousness. By the solemn fact of death with Him, by the glorious fact of life with Him, how shall we continue in sin?

But Paul does not let his conception of sin go at that. No stream ever ran but had somewhere a source, and sinning presupposes a sinful nature. The stream of sin in human conduct argues a seat of sin in the human heart. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Paul here and elsewhere commits himself to the fact of original sin. Reformation is not all of salvation. Salvation must affect character as well as conduct. It must change the nature as well as abolish the penalty. Therefore, while "the wages of sin is death," "the

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gift of God is eternal life." With this new life rising like a fountain in the soul, there is some hope of a new stream of conduct.

SIN AND LAW.

Of what use, then, are outward restraints? If sinning is the output of a sinful nature, and if the cure for a sinful nature is an inner spiritual experience that issues in a new nature, of what value are outward restraints, and of what use is law? Has not grace abolished law? And if grace, in curing sin has abolished law, does it not begin to appear that law is a kind of confederate of sin?

"God forbid!" is Paul's reply. He seems to say: "If your logic leads to that, it is logic gone mad." Salvation instead of destroying law demands it. For law reveals sin. "I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." It is when we begin to pull against the tether that we discover our limitation. It is when we learn what we ought to be that we begin to see what we are. It is when the law shows its commandment face that sin is unmasked.

It is law that not only unmasks sin, but that reveals our weakness. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me." It is when we go up against a perfect standard that our imperfections appear. It is when we attempt an impossible task that we are convicted of helplessness. Law demands perfection. This is God's standard. "Be ye perfect." Law summons to this

with its iron throat, and attempting to obey, we find ourselves powerless.

Not only does law unmask sin in conduct, not only does it reveal our innate weakness to cope with sin, but as law continues to thunder its demands, there opens a door that enters the secret chamber of our being, and we "see a law in our members warring against the law in our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members." Who that has struggled in earnest against sin but has seen it? "When we would do good, evil is present with us." Our own natures fight against us. We seem to be a sort of dual personality. Every man is something of a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In the battle with sin, our own natures turn against us, and threaten moral calamity and ruin. "Shall we continue in sin?" What other course is possible?

THE VICTORY OVER SIN

Is the battle with sin, then, to end in defeat? Paul begins this discussion by painting the blackest fact of life into his picture of human experience. Is the picture to remain dark? Is the struggle to go on with the ebb and flow of a battle in which the forces resident in the soul contend for the mastery, in which the law in the members and the law in the mind war against each other until, in the agony of conflict, the tortured soul exclaims: "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Many a man has uttered that cry. He has fought

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the beast. He has felt its hot breath in his face, and its foul clutch at his throat. He has found himself growing weaker. He has felt temptation growing subtler and stronger. He has seen the face of his soul's dread adversary mocking him across that hour of struggle, until his lips, blood-red with battle, have cried: "Wretched man that I am!"

Ah, but law has one other function! It unmasks sin in conduct. It discovers our weakness. It reveals the law in our members. And then it becomes a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Just as in the old days when the streets of wicked cities were full of peril, the schoolmaster came to guide and guard his pupils safely to the school, so the law comes to the soul in its battle with fierce temptation, and leads it into the presence of its conquering ally, the great Captain of our salvation. As we see Him, fear dies, courage revives, a superhuman strength is given, and hope shouts: "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Thus the black is painted out. Sin is slain. "Shall we continue in sin?" Why should we with such a Savior? Victory is certain. You can be saved. You can conquer sin. Then why should we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? Let us take up the corpse and bury it, the corpse of our old sinful nature. Let us bury that, and follow Him Who says: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand!"

V

OPTIMISM—PAUL'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—ROMANS 8: 1.

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."—ROMANS 8: 10.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—ROMANS 8: 14, 15, 16.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."—ROMANS 8: 19.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"—ROMANS 8: 24.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—ROMANS 8: 26.

V

OPTIMISM—PAUL'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE

THE eighth chapter of Romans is the victory chapter of the Bible. It is the safety passage in this great epistle. Paul reaches a place where he ceases to argue, and begins to claim; where he ceases to exclaim and begins to exult; where he pushes aside for the moment the great problems he has been considering, and surrenders himself to a contemplation of some of his sublime assets. In the midst of this holy reverie of victory and safety, he lifts his face toward the morning, and says: "We are saved by hope."

We are not saved by despair, but by hope. We are not saved by seeing how bad things are, but by seeing how good they are going to be. We are not saved by dwelling on our difficulties, but by counting our blessings. We are not saved by our fears, but by our faiths. We are saved by hope.

Hope is more than a mood of cheerfulness. It is far more than a bright and happy disposition. It is decidedly more than a disinclination to take life seriously. Indeed, there is nothing more serious than hope, and nothing should be more scientific. Hope is careful of the facts. It is careful not to underestimate difficulties, nor blind itself to the strength of its foes; but hope looks past all of these

to the eternal and infinite resources at the disposal of faith. Hope sees how things are going to be when God has His way. It discovers the invisible. It sees the celestial allies the prophet's servant saw when his eyes were opened, until it begins to exclaim: "The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" Since hope is all of this, it is undisturbed and undismayed. It is serene and happy, for it knows that in the blackest night the dawn approaches and, in what at the time seems defeat, victory is assured.

And so hope is the gospel of optimism. It is that philosophy of life which knows that "all things work together for good." It is the creed that the best is yet to be, and that therefore we may face any situation with triumphant confidence and imperturbable peace.

PAUL'S LIFE ATTITUDE

This was the life attitude of Paul. He had enough to worry any man to death. On every side he faced uncompromising opposition. His enemies never gave him any rest. They resorted to every device which the ingenuity of hate could invent to plague his life. He might well have been discouraged. An ordinary man would have grown sour and pessimistic. He might have said: "I have sacrificed all to serve Christ; surely if He has power and is interested He would take better care of His servants!"

But Paul's troubles never became worries. I do not mean that he was never heavy-hearted. He lived

too close to his crucified Master to be a stranger to the moods of the cross. So deeply did the iron enter his own soul that he could say: "I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." But Paul's confidence never wavered. He never thought of himself as whipped, nor of his cause as defeated. He was an optimist, and his attitude to life was that of unconquerable hope.

See him as he faces obstacles. He is not blind to the things in his way. He does not say that they are not there, but they are there not to defeat him, but to help him win. Once he said: "A great and effectual door is open unto me, and there are many adversaries." The opposition was a part of the opportunity. You cannot handle a man who handles opposition that way.

See him as he faces mean men, men who tried to trick him, men who played him false, men like Alexander the coppersmith, of whom he said: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works, of whom be thou ware also, for he hath greatly withstood our words." With that he dismisses the case. He seems to say that the Lord will take care of Alexander. It is not worth while for him to be disturbed over his rascality. What can you do with a man who disposes of his enemies in that way? You can never frighten him. You can never scare him from his duty. You can never intimidate or drive him from the field. He is invincible.

See him before his work. The care of all the churches is on him, but it is not on his nerves.

Sometimes we are depressed by what we have to do. Our work piles up. It looks like a mountain that is about to fall on us and crush us. We cry out against the size of our task. But you never hear Paul talking that way. Work never staggered him. It elated him. It summoned him. He said: "I can do all things through Christ." You cannot give that kind of a man too much to do. You will never break his spirit with overwork.

See Paul in peril, in the midst of that shipwreck on his way to Rome. Look into the scared faces of the passengers. Listen to their terrorized cries. See them as they rush hither and thither trying to devise some method of escape. Then look into the peaceful face of Paul. Listen to his voice of calm courage. Watch him as he stands there at ease, and hear him as he talks quietly to the frightened people. There will be no loss of life. He was a man whose soul was unafraid, whose mighty spirit could look death in the face and say: "All's well!"

See him in loneliness, on trial at Rome, in disgrace. His friends are all cowards. They are afraid to let it be known that they are his friends, lest they get into trouble. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." What of it? It was enough to make his spirit sag. But he does not seem cast down. Hear him as he talks on. "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." You cannot make that kind of a man lonely. You cannot depress one who lives in unbroken fellowship with God. You cannot make him lonely who has the infinite ever about him.

Thus we find Paul in every experience of life. His optimism was not spasmodic nor intermittent, but steady and permanent. It was the habit of his life. It was the atmosphere in which he did his work. It was the attitude he took to everything he met along the road of service; whether the day was gay or gray, whether the load was light or heavy, whether the face was friend or foe, whether the lot was joy or gloom, Paul said: "I am saved by hope."

THE GROUND OF HIS OPTIMISM

What was the secret of this great mood of life? Surely an optimism so splendid was not accidental. It was more than temperamental. It must have been fed from some unfailing and inexhaustible source. Paul's hope must have been built on a great foundation. In the first part of this chapter the foundation is suggested. We find the things on which Paul's optimism was built.

The first was "no condemnation." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." Why should one who has won his case at God's bar be cast down? What can earthly courts ever do to convict a man whom the courts of heaven have vindicated? Paul was thinking of the cross. His cheerfulness came from Calvary. His optimism rested on the atonement. He was happy because the great reconciliation had taken place. His sins had been blotted out, and he could thenceforth walk the earth uncondemned and un-

afraid. This is where optimism starts. No man can have much of a hope who has never been saved. No cheerfulness is of much value that is challenged at every step by God's frown on sin. The people who are permanently happy in this world are those who live on friendly terms with God.

The second thing is "life." "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Paul felt himself a new man. Something had taken place in his soul that changed everything. His poor old body was the same—bruised and battered with the thorn in the flesh. But Christ lived in him, and because Christ was his life he was without fear. His foes could no more hurt him than they could hurt Christ. That is how optimism is sustained. No man can maintain his hope whose resources are confined to the senses. The world can pester the flesh, but it is powerless to batter down and destroy the life of the spirit. He whose life is hid with Christ in God is guaranteed against calamity.

The third is "adoption." "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Paul felt that he was God's son. Why should he be afraid? Why should anything scare or depress him? Why should he give way to melancholy? "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." This is where optimism is steadied. Why should God's child be cast down? Earthly values break up and

disappear. Losses come. Health and happiness and home are taken away, but our real treasures remain untouched. "We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Therefore hope. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

The fourth is "expectation." "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Paul was looking for something big. He was gazing past the shadows for the substance. It was not what he had, but what he commanded, that made life great. That is where optimism gets its horizon. The Christian is an expectant. He is looking for big things. The best is ahead of him. There are higher heights to climb, and lovelier sights to behold, and richer fields to enter.

The fifth is "prayer." "Likewise also the spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." That is where optimism is fed and nourished. Paul was an optimist because he was a man of prayer. He was in constant communication with the base of supplies. He believed in Christ Who said: "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." He leaned on Him Who said: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." With

that kind of a bank account why should one ever be anxious? I do not see how a man who never prays can be optimistic. His cheerfulness will wither. Is there anything in prayer? If so, why should a Christian ever give way to despair? Suppose the situation is bad. God is on the throne. Suppose the world is in turmoil and confusion. God is on the throne. Suppose our loved ones are in danger. God is on the throne. "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."

These are some of the things on which Paul's optimism was founded. He was uncondemned, alive in Christ, adopted, expectant, tapping omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence with prayer. Is it any wonder that as he thinks of all this he exclaims: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose!" Hope has leaped up into the realm of certitude.

CHRISTIAN OPTIMISM

This is Christian optimism. If there is one person in the world who should be an optimist, it is the Christian. The Christian who is not an optimist is a heretic,—not a heretic of that comparatively harmless type which is unsound on questions of dogma and which formerly got itself burned at the stake, but now acquires a speedy notoriety in the secular press,—but a heretic of a far worse and more dangerous type, who is unsound on the spirit and genius of Christianity, and whose pessimism not

only slanders God but blocks the progress of His kingdom among men.

Surely if there be one person who can front the future undismayed and sing a song of hope, it is he whose gospel is Calvary, whose might is God's strength, whose allies are the invisible but invincible hosts of heaven, whose message is the evangel of divine love, and whose immortal hope shines like an undimmed star in the skies. It is no more possible for such an one to fail than it is for God to go bankrupt.

Christian optimism is more than a spasm of forced gayety. It faces ugly realities. Nowhere will you find the worst more faithfully portrayed and more frankly set down than in the Bible. The Bible calls things by their right names. It does not say that man is unfortunate, but a rebel. It does not say that he is a victim, but a wilful sinner. It does not say that he is sick, but dead in trespasses and sin.

Not only so, but it tempts men to enlist, not with a promise of reward, but with a demand for self-abnegation. Christ says to those who would enter His service: "You must give up everything, and be willing to go anywhere. If you follow me, I promise you peril and hardship, sacrifice and loneliness, shame and death. If you follow me you must give up home and parents, ease and comfort, and maybe life itself." Any earthly government that would attempt to recruit an army on this basis would soon go out of business. It is enough to frighten the volunteer spirit to death. Surely one who can be optimistic before such facts and on such terms of

enlistment must have more than a mellow mood of cheerfulness.

And yet, after all, the thing that makes an irresistible appeal to any kind of service worth mentioning is heroism. We make a mistake in trying to soften down the terms of discipleship. Christ knew what He was about. The heroic element in Christianity turns out to be its glory. It did not drive disciples away. It summoned men as wages could never summon them, and men will do as heroes what they would never do as hirelings. It is heroism and not gain that draws men to the cross. It is not the mercenary motive, but the day's long march, the nights on the hard ground, the shout of conflict, and the shock of battle, and the life laid down, that constitute Christ's assets. The Christian who is not thrilled by these things is dead freight.

While Christianity blurts out the whole truth about the hard facts of the campaign, and sees things as they are, and says so, through the groaning and travail of a lost world it hears a song. Through all the storm of battle it chants a hymn of victory. Through the long night of conflict it sees the light. For Christian optimism sees through the groaning and travail of creation the birth of Christ's kingdom. It sees in the fire-racked, far-flung battle line the path to glory. It sees in suffering the discipline of sainthood. The world's woe and sin are furnace fires in which raw might gets its temper. The hammer strokes on the anvil of time forge out destiny.

OPTIMISM AS AN INCENTIVE TO SERVICE

It is this spirit which equips for service. It was the spirit which equipped Paul as the servant of Jesus Christ. No one will ever do much for God or man without it. Christian optimism creates a big life, for it is a spirit of big dimensions.

It has breadth. Its hope is as wide as the race. It is optimistic not merely of some choice spirits, of certain nations that have culture, of certain individuals that have merit, of the elect, the refined, the civilized; but of everybody. When everything else is in despair, Christianity is full of hope. When schemes of charity are dumb with disappointment, Christianity remains confident. It is not only optimistic of every individual, but along the whole moral scale. It is cosmopolitan and racial, and when once the imagination is captured by it, the soul can never again be satisfied to dwell in a cave.

It has depth. It is not a shallow faith built on the surface of events. It roots itself in the plan of God. It is hopeful about the world because it believes that God rules, and that things are moving His way. When they seem to move otherwise, Christian optimism interprets it as an optical delusion. It chains itself to the only power that can regenerate human nature,—the cross of Christ. It is easy enough to tell people to be good and happy and useful, but how to carry this out is a problem. The gospel alone is the power of God unto salvation. Christian hope roots itself in the faith that whatever God wills

will be done. It therefore grows out of the life of God, and is sustained by the supernatural.

It has length. Its programme is infinite. It proposes to keep on making things better for others. Surely if there be anything that can suffuse the soul with passion, and fill the pulses with unconquerable enthusiasm, it is this vision of the coming kingdom.

It has height. Christian optimism thinks of changing the world by lifting it. It also has certitude. It never doubts for a moment the ultimate triumph of the Christian plan. Driven by a spirit with such dimensions as these, of such breadth and depth and length and height and certitude, God's servant is prepared for a task whose results only eternity can measure.

THE GOSPEL FOR OUR TIMES

These are times when we need this gospel of hope. The world is full of a great fear. War seems to have unsettled everything. Nothing any longer seems safe or sure. The quiet, peaceful days of a few years ago seem things of the dim and distant past. The nation is undergoing changes so rapid and far-reaching as to stagger and bewilder us. What does it all mean? What is to be the end?

We cannot shake off the grip of the conditions about us. Somewhere, somehow, this cruel war touches every life, and its shadow falls across every home. The cup of happiness which a while ago we held so securely in our hands is spilled out, and life seems shaping itself for all toward a Calvary where we must make our supreme sacrifice.

The unprecedented and unparalleled terrors of this war are maddening as well as depressing. Who would have believed five years ago that human nature is capable of deeds so devilish, that under any stress of necessity, driven by any lust for power, incited by any demand for self-preservation, a nation could so far forget, could so utterly despise all that it had learned of chivalry, of generosity and mercy, as for any cause to lend itself to the perpetration of such ruthless horrors? Before this spectacle of hell upheaving and splashing out on earth, men are startled and amazed.

It tempts us to despair. We become pessimistic, and conclude that it is useless to struggle. This is what I fear some are doing. They are letting the joy fade out of life. They are allowing faith to be challenged and confidence stained. I would not chide those who are heavy-hearted over the trouble that is on the world. These are times that try men's souls, and make people prematurely old; but I would remind them that we are not saved by despair, but by hope. I would bid them remember that God is still on the throne, and that since He is, however wars may rage, and the horrors of a war-mad world stain the earth, right will ultimately triumph over wrong.

Let us steady and strengthen ourselves with this hope. If for us as for Paul, there is no condemnation, why should we be afraid? If for us, too, Christ is our life, why should we be scared by all the shot and shell and weapons that assail the flesh? If we are also heirs of God, why should we

be unhappy over the loss of property, or over desolation in the earth? The real values abide. If for us, too, there is a continent of expectation, why should we ever feel lonely? If we pray, why should we despair? If God be near, how can happiness be far? If God lives why should hope die?

And so I commend Paul's attitude to life to the times in which we live. The world needs people who hope, who are confident, who decline to surrender to gloom, who can keep their footing on roads that are slippery, and find their way through places that are pathless, and fight down and overcome the beastly things which assail all that is holy in life. We need people who will not give up, who say with President Wilson: "Here we stand; we can do none else," who look beyond gloom and red ruin and see the fields green again, and see the smile of heaven on the land, and hear the laughter of children unafraid, and keep right on as if all of this had never for one moment been imperiled.

To have such a brave and confident spirit, one must possess more than a cheerful disposition and the habit that looks on the bright side of life. He must have a hope that feeds by faith on the power and wisdom and goodness of a God Who is on the throne. I do not see how people can get along these days without God. Dr. Hugh Black says that four years ago when he went to speak to the students of a certain university, he asked the president on what he should speak, and the president replied: "Talk about anything but religion." Recently he went back to the same institution to speak again, and

when he asked the same question, the president said: "Talk about anything provided it has religion!"

I commend to you the comfort of the gospel for these trying times. Throw yourself into the arms of your heavenly Father. Let Him keep you. Let the thought that His will is holy and sure make you strong. Let the knowledge that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" fill your tired heart with peace and keep your worn spirit brave during these days of the world's darkest and deadliest tragedy. "For we are saved by hope!"



VI

WHERE THE BIG CREEDS BLEND—PAUL'S THEOLOGY

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—ROMANS 8:28.

VI

WHERE THE BIG CREEDS BLEND—PAUL'S THEOLOGY

WHAT is attempted in this chapter is not to expound Paul's theology, but to try to suggest his method. Christ's servant builds his theology out of his experience. He does not say: "We believe it," but "We know it." There probably was a time when he could not even say: "We believe it," when he might have said: "We hope it,"—when possibly he would have said: "We doubt it." There was a time when he questioned it, when he challenged it, when it seemed to him that everything was wrong. Society was going to the demnition bow-wows. But he has grown out of all that. He has left the fogs behind him. He has climbed out of the mire and swamp. He stands on the sunlit heights and this is what he says: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

It is a great affirmation. If it be true, all's right with the world. The track ahead is clear, and all signals along the road are set for happiness. If it be false, the world is upside down. There is no track on which to run, and no happiness that is worth our while to seek.

It would be a work of supererogation to attempt to prove this glorious affirmative of Christian experience. The sun does not try to prove that it shines. It merely shines. To doubt the sun, one must become a cave dweller. He must put out his eyes and hide himself from the light. God does not try to prove that He is out for human welfare. He simply shines in the glory of His changeless love for all His creatures. To doubt God's goodness is to advertise one's self as a blind soul.

In our study of this affirmation from Paul's experience, it were better to let it take us up to the sunlit summit where such a great assumption proclaims itself, and allow it to show us how there all the big creeds blend and merge and become a common conviction. This is what Christian experience does for theology. It lays hold of the good in all systems, and reconciles their apparently irreconcilable differences.

UNIVERSALISM

"All things work together for good." That is Universalism. Universalism is the creed that everything is headed for heaven,—that no one is to be damned, that nothing is to be lost, that what seems to be a wreck is only a symptom of evolution, that what seems to be defeat is merely the strategy of victory, and that what we call evil is only the night-time name for what in the day-time we call good.

It is the creed the great poets have sung, and that big souls have cherished. Hear Tennyson as he says:

"My own hope is that good shall fall
At last far off, at last to all,
And every winter turn to spring;
That not one life shall be destroyed
Or cast as rubbish to the void
When God has made the pile complete."

Where is the soul that does not leap in swift and glad response to such a creed? One may not believe it, but how can he fail to hope it? Where is the heart that does not long not only for happiness for himself, but also for his fellows? To delight in the sufferings of anybody or anything is unnatural. It is a mark of depravity. It is the sign of a twist in the soul. One may not be able to relieve suffering, but he can certainly pity the sufferer.

God seems to be a Universalist in all His plans and purposes and desires. It is blasphemy to believe that He made His creatures to destroy them, that He created beings and then consigned them to an eternal torment. He has no title to our love if He can be happy over the misfortunes of the world. God was a Universalist in the exercise of His creative power. The world was built on lines of harmony, and had God's laws been perfectly obeyed, pain and sickness and sorrow and death could not have entered. He is a Universalist in His attitude toward the world. He exists for all His creatures. He is like the air, or the flower, or the beauty of field and sky. Every creature may look up into God's face and say: "Thou art mine." Every human being who will may claim Him. Blind Bartimeus begging by the roadside could say: "He

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is mine!" Rich Zaccheus hated by his neighbors could say: "He is mine!" Peter and Mary Magdalene and the thief on the cross could say: "Thou art my Savior!" Even Judas Iscariot, had he desired, could have claimed Him. God is a Universalist in His redemptive longings. He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. It is not His will that any should perish, but that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Universalism is a big creed. But we must write a question mark after it. While the Bible says that God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked, it does not say that there is no such thing as the death of the wicked. While we are told that He would have all men be saved, we are not told that all men are saved. As we look about us, as we look within us, as we note the sorrow and suffering in the world, as we see faces not lit with happiness, but shamed with sin and stained with despair, we are forced to feel that the sentence which says, "All things work together for good," is unfinished. Paul must write more out of his experience, and tell us how he can so confidently affirm so glorious a conviction. This he does.

ARMINIANISM

"To them that love God." That is Arminianism. Arminianism is the creed that God is for those who treat Him right, that salvation is dependent on a human element, that happiness is only for people who comply with the conditions, and that one's

world is what he makes it. If you want God for your Friend, if you desire to secure His approval, you must do His will.

Arminianism is not a shabby creed. It knocks at the door of common sense. It insists that we be honest, that we practice what we profess. Universal salvation is a beautiful dream, but how can there be salvation for a man who hates God, who casts God out of his heart, who cuts Him out of his life, who arrays himself against the law and order of God's word?

If things are to work together for good in God's world for me, I must co-operate with God. I must be friendly. I must love Him. I must work out my own salvation with fear and trembling. It is a good world, and one can get out of it whatever he may choose. If he desires existence to be a nightmare, it is within his power to thwart the word of God so far as his own life is concerned, and be lost. But if he desires to be happy, if he wants the worst ever to be turning to the best, he will find all about him the materials for happiness, and may build his house as big and beautiful as he will.

Nevertheless, we are still disposed to feel that there is an incompleteness in the statement. Paul must go further. We are disposed to write a question mark after Arminianism. Is it the whole truth? Does man get only what he deserves? Is God the friend only of those who are friendly to Him? If His love stops there, if He loves only His lovers, if He claims as His children only those who behave themselves and treat Him right, if He disowns the

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prodigal and wayward and rebellious members of His family, is He not a poor sort of a God, and does not this creed of Arminianism go stale and flat when it faces the need of the world? Therefore Paul writes on.

CALVINISM

"To them who are the called according to His purpose." That is Calvinism. Calvinism is the creed that God is for those whom He elects to include in His plan, that salvation is based, not on human merit, but on Divine grace; that God when He started to make the world had a plan in mind, and proceeded unfalteringly in harmony with His plan, that events occur not because they cannot be avoided, but because they are pre-determined, that God's conduct is predicated on His character, and not on His inclinations, that He foreknows because He foreordains, not that He foreordains because he foreknows.

Calvinism is a big creed. It is a creed with a big God. Arminianism says man is great. Calvinism says God is great. Arminianism says man is happy because he deserves to be. Calvinism says he is happy because he was created to be. Arminianism says all things work together for good because men love God. Calvinism says all things work together for good because God has so decreed. Calvinism dips back into the realm where omnipotence works and omniscience provides. If I am to have no better world than I build, my house will be mean indeed, but if God is building for me a house not

made with hands eternal in the heavens, my palace of happiness will be complete.

Nevertheless, is not this creed of Calvinism somewhat arbitrary? Can it be that one section of the race is scheduled for happiness and another for woe? What kind of a God is He Who sits back there in the secret council chamber of His eternal purposes, and fashions one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor, Who decrees one soul to bliss and another to misery, Who catalogues one section of the race for heaven and another for hell? We feel that God's decrees must be interpreted, that those who are the called according to His purpose must have more than the arbitrary fiat of an a priori God to their credit, that while there is an election, there must also be a selection. Fitness should qualify. In other words, the last part of this line of Pauline theology must not divorce itself from the two phrases which precede, and both the second and third phrases must tie up to the first before it can stand the test of life.

And so we have in a line out of a man's experience the three big creeds of Universalism, Arminianism, and Calvinism. They are related to each other as the three sides of a triangle. Neither is complete without the other. You have a poor gospel that leaves out of its song of hope a single child in God's great family, You have a false gospel that tries to make men happy without the love of God in their hearts. And you have an infirm and powerless gospel that is not ribbed and spined with the changeless and eternal purposes of God.

REFLECTIONS

There is something good and great and true in every big creed that has challenged and captured the faith of men. There is something good and great and true in Universalism and Arminianism and Calvinism. Not all in them may be true, but something is. Not one of them has all the truth, and not one of them can get along without the others. We cannot all see things alike. Each sees through the lens of his personality and experience, and none sees much more than the face of truth that is over against him. We may rest assured, however, that nothing ever gets a big and permanent following unless it possesses some element of value. We should not forget that we need not only the truth we ourselves discover, but also that discovered by our brothers and sisters. Let us therefore be tolerant. Instead of fighting the man whose vision of truth is unlike mine, let me supplement my faith with his, and share my faith with him.

While creeds differ, there is a place where they blend. Paul is standing there in the great affirmation we have been considering. He is not engaged in controversy. He is not arguing for dogma. He is not a Universalist, and he is not an Arminian, and he is not a Calvinist. He is a man with a Christian experience, who can say: "I know." This is where the big creeds meet—in the lustrum of Christian experience. We differ in our dogmas, but when we begin to talk in terms of the heart's acquaintance with God, we all speak the same language. God

tells the same story in every life He saves. There is not a Universalist way of saving people, or an Arminian way, or a Calvinistic way. The process is ever the same. What makes one a Christian in the Episcopal Church makes him a Christian in the Presbyterian Church. What makes him a Christian in a Protestant Church makes him a Christian in the Roman Catholic Church. There is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Let us not fling away our creed, but let us not imagine that our little rite is all. When we are tempted to do as the apostles did when they forbade the man who was casting out devils in Christ's name because he followed not with them, let us remember Christ's rebuke when He said: "He that is not against us is for us."

Is there not something greater than creed? It is certitude. There is something greater than belief. It is to be able to say: "I know because I have believed." It is the knowledge that results from faith. It is that summit peak toward which the lower ranges of creedal thought slope, and in which they merge and blend and become one. It is that far height on which a soul may stand high above all the clouds that clothe the foothills, and in the face of all the fogs of doubt may say: "I know whom I have believed!" A great soul must seek that height and be satisfied with nothing short of it.

The heights are there if we will but claim them, where life is serene, and peace unbroken, and conviction undismayed,—where we may look past all troubles, beyond all doubts and confusion, and know that everything is for the best. To this height God

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invites us. It is the conviction that smites sin and despair from human life, that makes vice fling aside the mask from its foul features, and that breaks the hideous spell of evil.

In view of all this, is it not evident that the essentials of Christianity are to be tested out, not in the realm of ecclesiasticism or of dogmatism, or of humanitarianism, but in that of experience, in that of the heart's acquaintance with God?

What are the essentials of Christianity? The point is not what is essential to an adequate understanding of Christianity, to a sufficient safeguarding of its adherents against heresies and errors, to a successful promotion of its aims, and to a saving acceptance of its message; but what is essential to Christianity itself,—to its being, its existence? What are the things without which it would not be? What are its fundamentals? What is its essence? What are the things we cannot surrender without surrendering, not the form and features of Christianity, but Christianity itself?

One's answer to such a question must be in the nature of the case powerfully affected by training, temperament, and tradition. How much our opinion of and attitude to Christianity are affected by these we are all doubtless unconscious of. But suppose one could wholly emancipate himself from tradition, and shake off the spell of temperament, and unhand the grip of training and association, and thus, free and unbiased, take up the religion of Jesus and endeavor to answer the question, "What are its essentials?" what would his answer be?

It is probably not possible for any of us quite successfully to achieve any such an adventure. In the very nature of the case the conclusions reached must appear iconoclastic, and doubly so to the conservative, and almost dangerously so to the reactionary.

Immediately the thought arises, Why discuss such a question? Of what value can it be? Must it not, in the very nature of the case, be wholly academic? Would not a far wiser and more profitable study be, not What can we give up without giving up Christianity; but What do we most need to promote its widespread acceptance and speedy and complete triumph in the earth?

Nevertheless, as we go along, it may be discovered that these two propositions are not so far apart as they at first seem. It is barely possible that some of the things which Christianity has taken on in its development may be a hindrance rather than a help, may be baggage rather than vital force.

It is undoubtedly true that some features have been added, and added not always for the purpose of making the gospel more effective, but for the purpose of bringing it as a system into fuller harmony with the views of certain of its adherents. That these additions are not necessarily either essential to the existence of Christianity or indispensable to its efficiency must be evident from the fact that Christianity existed without them, and experienced what was probably its golden age before they took shape.

It may be urged that these additions came as an

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evolution of Christianity, and therefore are essential to its adaptation to the successive environments in which it finds itself. In other words, would the first century conception of Christianity answer for twentieth century life? I am not raising here the question as to the fundamental principles involved, which I assume we must all agree are permanent, but the application of these principles to the demands of a growing world and an expanding race.

For instance, the twentieth century is the century in which man is trying to define his duties not so much to his God as to his fellowmen. It is the era of reaches after human fellowship and brotherhood. The principles on which this must be wrought out have always inhered in Christian truth, but the application of these principles opens new vistas. It creates the age of social service, and the church finds itself to-day assaying a new set of harness.

There may be church leaders who will decline the new harness, who will say the old is good enough for them; the traces which pulled the load the fathers carried is all the harness they want or will have. They will, however, not do much with the modern load in that harness. A hand-shovel was a good tool for railroading on the level plains, but the steam shovel has made the ditch across the Isthmus of Panama possible.

The church has always been changing its tools, and it has always had some faithful followers whose devotion to the tool has made their hand, like David's, cleave thereto. They have looked upon a change of tools as a change of principles. Is it?

Are the forms and systems which the followers of Christianity have evolved as humanity has progressed and the race has made new demands on religion, of more than transitory value? And is not Christianity itself handicapped when it is insisted that it must regard them as vital to its existence and a permanent part of its equipment?

There are three developments of this class which may be noticed briefly:

I. The first is the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This came as one of the earliest developments of the church. It was an effort not only to bring the administration of religion into order, but so to relate it to itself and to human governments as to conserve its power.

Perhaps few but will agree that the hierarchal features of Christianity are not only not essential to its life, but have proven a serious hindrance to vital religion.

Are we willing, however, to carry such an estimate to the conclusion it legitimately involves,—namely, that church orders are not essential to Christianity, that an ordained ministry is not a vital part of the religion of Christ, that church government is not fundamental?

If so, we must eliminate polity from the essentials of Christianity. This is not saying that some form of orders and government is not necessary to the church, for it is; but the church is a product of religion, not its cause. To put water on the table some kind of a pitcher is needed, but the pitcher is not the water, and if one is not averse to being

primitive, he may break the pitcher and drink at the spring, and still quench his thirst.

2. A second development has been the ritualistic or liturgical. It came with the effort to make worship not only decent and orderly, but impressive. Sometimes it has attired worship in robes most ornate, and sometimes in a garb most simple.

There have been ritualists and anti-ritualists all worshipping the same God with the same devotion and for the same end, and with the same dogmatic attachment to their particular style of church millinery, whether it was high mass in a cathedral or a gospel song in a mission hall.

Are we ready, however, to say that the ritual, whether it be rich or bare, is essential to worship? Worship is undoubtedly vital to religion, and when public, must express itself in some form. When this form becomes regular, it of course becomes formal. But is it not possible to worship God in spirit and in truth? Indeed, must not worship itself exist before it dons its clothes? In other words, ritualism, using the term in its largest sense, is not an essential of Christianity.

3. A third development has been the creedal or theological. This has been an effort, not to create truth, but to bring Christian truth into orderly and systematic and dogmatic form. Here perhaps the most serious and widespread divergence of views among the adherents of Christianity appears. Our creeds have by no means harmonized. The church has been cleft asunder by the hierarchy, it has been

divided by ritualism, it has been split into fragments by creeds!

Men have lined up behind certain theological systems and felt that any surrender of their system involved a corresponding disloyalty to Christianity itself. At the same time the adherents of these hostile theological systems were at one in the object of their worship and in their surrender to the leadership of Christ and His Spirit.

If this be true,—and who can doubt it?—if it be a fact that men holding very diverse theological views have been together in the high quality of their Christian character and in the value and devotion of their Christian service, can we say that the creedal is an essential of Christianity?

Indeed, is truth itself either affected by or dependent upon our views of truth? Is not Christian truth a positive and permanent thing, regardless of the views which successive generations or hostile schools of thought may entertain about it? Indeed, is it not likely that any dogmatic statement of Christian truth must in the case be inadequate and temporary, by reason of the fact that a fuller experience may give a larger vision, and this in turn furnish the material for an improved creedal statement?

Thus our theological systems, instead of being cast-iron affairs, must be in a constant state of change. Creeds are only stepping-stones on which the church passes from domain to domain in the realm of spiritual progress. They are the hard and fast expressions of the religious thinking and living of the age which creates them. I do not mean that

Christian truth is in a state of evolution, for the great facts of Christianity as revealed in the Bible are changeless. I refer to the dogmatic moulds into which men have cast these truths.

But to say that even these were neither vital to their age nor of immense value to successive ages would be inaccurate. The point is simply this: Christianity existed before them, without them. They are products of the movement,—not the truths with which they deal, but the dogmatic forms in which these truths have been cast.

If a whole Christianity existed previous to the Council of Nice or the Westminster Assembly, then the acceptance of the theological views Jesus put to these bodies is no more essential to Christian truth than ritualism is to worship or hierarchy to life.

If, then, one may be in fellowship with God without a priest, if he may worship without a ritual, and if he may serve God and man without subscribing to this or that particular dogma or creed, is not Christianity handicapped when it is insisted that men must regard these things as vital to its existence, and a permanent part of its equipment?

If these be eliminated, is anything left? If we take the position that the matter of holy orders is a non-essential in religion, that the matter of the form of worship is of minor importance, and that the matter of the dogmatic statement into which truth may be cast is itself a creature of shift and change, is there anything left in Christianity which may be regarded as fixed, permanent, fundamental, essential, timeless?

I would mention three things which would seem to be essential and fixed, which no evolution can revolutionize, and without which Christianity would cease to be itself. The first is its spirit, the second its facts, the third its business.

1. The spirit of Christianity is sacrificial service. It is not sacrifice alone, but sacrifice for the sake of service. Its ideal of greatness is this kind of service. Its heroes are servants,—not people in menial positions, but people who use what they have for the common welfare.

As Gerald Stanley Lee remarks in "Crowds," when Christ said: "He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant," he did not mean, "Let him be your butler, your hostler, your porter, your footman." People who thus interpret Christ cling to the mediæval, morality-play, Servant-in-the-House idea, a kind of head-waiter idea of what Christ meant. Lee says Christ meant not servanthood, but service, and that He might as well have said: "He that is greatest among you, let him be your Duke of Wellington, your Lincoln, your Edison, your Marconi."

But it is service with a cross that is peculiar to Christianity. It is the service which the individual renders the race by offering himself. This is peculiar and essential to Christianity. It is bigger than all forms, better than all sects and systems. It is timeless and changeless, and has and is changing the world.

2. Next to the spirit of Christianity stand its facts. What are they? There are two that are es-

sential,—Christ and Christian, and inhering in them, of course, the facts which make Christ, Christ; and the facts which make a Christian a Christian. Neither is complete without the other. Together they suffice for the facts of religion. All that is vital is there and they are permanent and timeless. We do not question that Christ is, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. But is not a Christian a fact as timeless? The thing which made a man a Christian in the first century is precisely the thing which makes him a Christian in the twentieth century. The thing which makes him a Christian in the Romish Church is precisely the thing which makes him a Christian in the Protestant Church. In other words, Christian experience has no sectarian or century labels. A Christian is a Christian, whatever church he may belong to, whatever form he may worship by, whatever creed he may subscribe to, for he is what he is not because of these, but in order to them. He is what he is by reason of a spiritual experience that is common to all who become the children of God.

The question will be raised: Is not the Bible a fact of Christianity? It undoubtedly is, and for the mission of truth-revealing, it is essential. But the New Testament is not Christianity, but its product. We may say Christianity would not last in human society if the Bible were destroyed; but it could exist without the Bible, for it did. The Bible, therefore, is not an essential of Christianity. The two facts which are essential are Christ and Christian. Without the first, the second could not exist; and

without the second, the first could not operate in society. Together they complete the facts which are essential to the existence of Christianity.

3. Next to the facts is the business of Christianity. Its business is to bring men into fellowship with God, and thereby bring about all which this produces. Christ said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." To His followers He said: "Ye are my witnesses." Therefore the business of Christians is to testify to what Christ achieves and reveals,—the Gospel of reconciliation which brings us to the Fatherhood of God, and as a sequel to this, to the brotherhood of man. This is the program. It widens out until it takes in everything and everybody. It is the business in which every Christian is engaged, whatever his orders or doctrine. It is the only business in which any Christian has ever been engaged or in which any Christian ever can engage. It is timeless, permanent, essential. It is not possible to think of Christianity apart from this mission any more than it is to think of the sun apart from sunshine.

Wherever the spirit of Christ is, a dynamic force operates, and it operates invariably to one end. It reconciles men to God and to each other. Wherever a Christian lives, Christ lives, and He lives as a revealing Personality to show the world that God is Father and men are brothers. As men come into these relations, they are saved, and as the world comes under the spell of this spirit, it becomes Christ's kingdom.

Here, then, are at least three elements which we

may regard as Christian essentials,—the spirit, the facts, and the business of Christianity. The spirit is sacrificial service, the facts are Christ and Christian, and the business is bringing men into fellowship with God through a reconciling or atoning Savior. Give any nation or any age these three things, and that age or that nation may be trusted to create its own orders, to develop its own ritual, and to make its own creed. Withhold from any age or nation any one of these three essentials, and we shall find the effort to make it Christian a hopeless, an impossible task.

If so, does it not follow that an emphasis of these things as against an emphasis of either orders, liturgies, or dogmas must conduce to the progress and victory of Christian truth? And may it not be that an over-emphasis of the importance of orders, liturgies, and dogmas may have retarded that progress and victory?

In closing, I would suggest the bearing of all this on the question of church union.

The day is far past, it would seem, for an intelligent Christian to defend sectarian, or if you please, denominational divisions. Christ prayed that His church might be one, and the kind of unity He longed for was undoubtedly a unity that anybody could recognize. He tells us that He wanted this oneness in order that the world might know that God had sent Him. He seemed to say that a divided church meant a discredited Christ.

We have, however, not yet found a basis for union

which we can adopt without feeling that such adoption involves disloyalty to truth and will probably result in new dissensions and divisions. But we have been proceeding on the theory that this basis of union must be hewn out of second-growth timber rather than from the virgin forest. We have wondered how much we could surrender of our orders, and how much we could take from our liturgies, and how much subtract from our creeds, in order to get together. Why not give to every Christian full liberty as to all of this? Why require the acceptance or rejection of any part of it? Why not take these questions where Paul took his theology—into the realm of Christian experience—and try to settle them there? Why not make the basis of union the things on which all Christendom is and always has been and always must be agreed,—the spirit of sacrificial service, the facts of Christ and Christian, and the business of bringing men into fellowship with God and so with each other?

Thus far, schemes for church union based on loose orders or mutilated liturgy or an emasculated creed have failed, as they deserve to fail.

But if Christ wants His people one, there must be a way to get together, and so thoroughly and genuinely together that even the dull, flesh-eyed world shall recognize the union!



VII

PREDESTINATION—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”—ROMANS 8: 29-32.

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”—EPHESIANS 1: 5-12.

VII

PREDESTINATION—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES

IF anyone concludes that because the big creeds blend in Paul's experience, his theology therefore lacks a spine, he is far afield from the facts. Paul says: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." All that is great in Universalism, in Arminianism, and in Calvinism lies in the experience of the soul that is personally acquainted with Christ. This, however, does not mean a weak faith. Paul goes on to say: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" There is strength for you. There is stability. There is the steel and the granite. There is Paul's doctrine of the divine decrees. He was not afraid of God's decrees. He was not in a panic because God is in control. Paul's God is no weakling. He is sovereign, Master of the universe. Therefore, His servant is not afraid, but

walks the earth with quiet confidence, and faces the future with undismayed hope. Paul believed in predestination. As a servant of Christ, the thought that the will of God is back of all that comes to pass did not frighten him.

DIFFICULTIES

The doctrine of predestination furnishes serious difficulties to many good people. These difficulties are not imaginary. Is God arbitrary? Is He partial? Has He from all eternity and apart from all voice and act of ours sovereignly decreed one portion of the human race to everlasting happiness and another portion to everlasting woe? Is the world what it is because of God's foreordination? If so, how can God escape responsibility for the existence of sin? Is not divine justice reduced to a fiction? Do not God's eternal decrees brand Him with favoritism in that highest and most sacred of all the realms of life, the spiritual? These are some of the difficulties connected with predestination. It is useless to deny them, for they are there, and insistent. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to inquire whether they are difficulties that inhere in the doctrine or difficulties that arise because of the limitation of human thought in its efforts to apprehend and understand the doctrine.

We may lay it down as a safe rule to begin with that the Christian should go fearlessly and unhesitatingly wherever the Bible may lead. A doctrine is true and credible not because it is pleasant to believe or easy to understand or popular with the masses,

but because it is taught in sacred Scripture. The Christian must be willing to sacrifice human reason and human logic to the explicit statements of Scripture; for reasons and logic may be fallible. They do not always stand the test of experience. The Bible we believe to be infallibly inspired, and inerrant in all questions of faith and practice. It invites the test of experience, and is vindicated thereby. The Bible gives to man his highest, clearest, truest, divinest vision of God.

When Mr. Stanley was wandering around in Central Africa in connection with his relief expedition for the rescue of Emin Pasha who, as it turned out afterwards, did not want to be rescued, he came upon the famed and what was thought up to that time to be the fabulous "Mountains of the Moon." For days he and his men wandered around the base of these mountains, catching glimpses of projecting spurs and ample slopes; but the heavy and perpetual mists that swathed the loftier summits limited the perspective and made the vision unsatisfactory. One day, however, the atmospheric conditions suddenly changed. The clouds lifted. There was a rift of heaven's sunshine into the veil of mist, and the great explorer saw mighty Ruwenzori in its full and undiminished splendor, looked upon the lofty mountain from its base sheer up to the dizzy summit of its sublime peaks towering eighteen to nineteen thousand feet in height, crowned with perpetual snows and standing through all the centuries as the source of the Nile and the annual replenisher of its fertile valleys.

The view which human reason has of God is like the cloud-shut mist-limited perspective which Stanley and his men had of the Ruwenzori Mountain. We touch God here and there in our little life, but God is infinitely more than that we touch. The Bible gives us the one clear view of God, from earth to heaven, from this point of time here out into the limitless eternity. It is God's revelation of Himself. It is faultless. What does the Bible discover God to be? What has it to say about His decrees?

Predestination is in the Bible. There can be no more doubt of it than that the sun shines. Whatever predestination may mean, it is in the Bible explicitly, repeatedly, unmistakably. The word and its counterparts are ever occurring. God "chooses," "elects," "wills," "arranges," "determines," "fore-ordains," "predestinates." Israel was an "elect nation," "a peculiar people." The "king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Similar passages might be quoted at length. Whatever predestination may mean, the Bible teaches it. It recognizes that God was thinking, planning, determining from the foundation of the world, and that what has transpired has transpired not by accident, but by divine prearrangement. Bethlehem was not the product of chance. Calvary was not a fortuitous incident. The Bible is not the output of circumstances. Back of all is the "determinate council and foreknowledge of God."

Predestination is likewise in the creeds of all

Christian churches. It is there either explicitly or implied, either by direct statement or by necessary inference. There is no exception. It is true of papal as well as of Protestant communions. It must be true so long as the Bible is of any authority in shaping the church creed.

To be sure, some churches state the doctrine mildly. They endeavor to mellow it, to limit its sweep, to reduce it to the capacity of human thought. But all must recognize its presence. The difference between the denominations with regard to predestination is not that one church accepts it and another denies it. The difference is in the place assigned to the doctrine.

We must believe in predestination. If one thinks at all on the subject of religion, he must believe in predestination or he must believe in something worse. We face a condition. The world exists, humanity is here with a certain history behind it, with certain influences and opportunities around it, with certain aspirations and dispositions within, and all of this under certain laws and for manifest purposes. How does it all come about? If there be a God, what part did He take in what lies behind, what has He to do with the present, and what influence will He have on the future? Is He silent, indifferent, or active? Is God merely a spectator? Having made the world, does He leave it to manage itself while He sits serene and satisfied in His distant heaven looking on with supreme indifference and unconcern, beholding the struggles of His creatures, a witness to their woes, and Himself clothed

with omnipotence but refusing to enter the combat or lend a hand in the struggle?

This is one view. God is merely a spectator. If so, He is unmerciful. He may call Himself a God of love, but it is an empty boast. If God sees our hardships, trials, temptations, sorrows, and ceaseless struggles, but while possessing the power, refuses to relieve His creatures, He is heartless. Rather than accept such a monstrous travesty of the Deity, I welcome predestination with all its difficulties.

Is God not even a spectator? Is He ignorant as well as unconcerned? Having made the world, has He not only turned His back on it, but forgotten all about it? Has the present situation been produced by chance? Are the laws of nature the result of accident? If so, never parent had stranger offspring. Chance is fickle, but the laws of life are fixed. From the earliest dawn of history, they have been working with clock-like regularity. How comes it that a thing so fickle and changing as chance has brought about a result so fixed and unchanging as law? Nevertheless, there are those who are willing to accept even this in order to get rid of God's interference. God is not only not looking on. He does not even know that we are here. If that be true, the doubt may be excused which asks: Where is God? What is He for? What is He about? Is He at all?

But one other alternative is possible. It is predestination. God had, has, and will always have a controlling hand in the affairs of the world. He is neither indifferent nor ignorant. He sees, knows,

feels, thinks, plans, executes, and has always. If God is ignorant of human life, there is no escape from atheism. If God is merely a spectator, there is no escape from infidelity. Only when God's mighty will is found behind everything, working out His eternal purposes, does faith find standing room and prayer a voice. Granted this alternative that predestination is a reality, and prayer ceases to be a rushlight flickering fitfully in the swamps of superstition and becomes life's guiding star shining high and clear above the tablelands of faith.

CARICATURES

Predestination has been made unpopular by caricature, unworthy apology, and inadequate statement. It has been confounded with absolutism. It has been regarded as an ironshod decree of the Almighty that rides remorselessly over human need, human desire, human merit, human character, driving resistlessly toward its fixed and unalterably predetermined goal, landing one portion of humanity in heaven and another in hell, despite all the efforts they may make to the contrary. The dogmaticians have divorced God's decrees from God's heart. They have made the doctrine into a dogma dry and sapless. They have reduced it to a meatless skeleton and offered it to the soul to feed upon. Having lost its fragrance, its bloom, its lifebeat, is it strange that men have come to regard it as a hard doctrine? If predestination is but the arbitrary fiat of an a priori God, there is little in it to comfort faith or encourage hope. But that is not predestination. It is the

nightmare of it. Rather than believe in such a God as this, I prefer not to know Him at all.

Predestination has been matched against human freedom. It has been thought to reduce man's free agency to a fiction. Necessity has been confounded with certainty, and it has been thought impossible for man to do freely what God has purposed. It has thus branded with insincerity every gospel invitation and schedule for everlasting happiness or endless woe, with total disregard of individual preference or personal fitness. This is not predestination. It is its caricature. Such a dogma is contradicted in our own experience as well as by every page of revelation. The Bible teaches that God's decrees, instead of destroying, establish the right of choice on the part of His creatures. God projected the human race along the lines of free agency. A part of His eternal plan was that man should not be an automaton, but an intelligent being played on by motives and invested with the right and power freely to choose. Thus predestination, instead of preventing man's free agency, is its eternal decretal.

These are some of the caricatures of the doctrine. It has also suffered from apology and unworthy defense. Accepting the caricature as a fair and faithful portrait, it has been urged that the doctrine is to be accepted because God has the right to do as He pleases with His creatures. He owns them. If He wants to send some to heaven, He may. If He would send others to hell, it is His right. Who shall question the rights of the Almighty, or put Him on trial for any of His acts? If God be this, He is

merely a great slave master, His people the most abject of slaves, and worship but sullen submission to the inevitable. But God is a Father. His people are His children, and worship is adoration of God's goodness and love.

Another view regards God as under no obligation. He has made us. We are pensioners on His bounty for our very existence. God owes us nothing. He is not responsible to us. Logically that is true. Morally it is a lie. God is under obligation, the obligation of His love, of His mercy, of His nature. God is bound to be true to Himself, and to say that He may arbitrarily save one and damn another is to bring an indictment against the character of God as black as hell itself.

Still another view is that God for some inscrutable purpose, in order to accomplish His own glory, has sovereignly decreed some to be saved and others to be lost. There is a tradition that some of the Lord's elect, in an age of the church which must not have been very far removed from the dark ages, made the supreme test of orthodoxy on the part of those seeking church membership a willingness to be damned should it be for God's glory. What blasphemy! God is not glorified by the damnation of His creatures. It is not His will that one of these little ones should perish. Besides, if God can be glorified by the salvation of a part, why not by the salvation of all? How comes it that God's glory can be so easily satisfied? God's glory is His goodness, His grace, and if His grace longs for the redemption of one soul, much more for all!

Another lame approach to the subject is that predestination has reference to nations and not to individuals, that God predestinates the mass, but declines to touch the unit. This will not stand the test of even a kindergarten mind. Anyone who thinks a thing out knows that the nation is made up of individuals, and that the individual citizens of a nation determine the nation's destiny. The only way God can predestinate America is by predestinating Americans. To substitute nations for individuals is merely an artful dodge of the main issue. It is the substitution of a fog-bank for an explanation.

WHAT IS PREDESTINATION?

Perhaps the decks have been sufficiently cleared for a direct approach to the subject. What is predestination? It is God's plan for man's redemption. Let us keep clearly before us what is meant by predestination, first negatively, and then positively. It is not the doctrine that God's decrees nullify human freedom. We are out of our depth at once. We cannot reconcile divine sovereignty and man's free agency, but we must believe both. At first flush, foreordination may seem identical with fatalism, but it seems so, not because it is, but because our minds confuse things at long range. The bands of Saturn are not bands of gas, as we have long thought, but of innumerable satellites revolving around the planet. So if our intellectual vision were keen enough, we should discover that predestination is not the fatalistic decree of an arbitrary God Who smashes with His fiat all into sameness, but that before Him the

crowd breaks up into individuals whose personality He regards as sacred.

Neither is it the doctrine that God decrees the damnation of any soul. The finite mind is disposed to say that God's failure to elect is equivalent to a decree to damn. This, however, is just another case of where the shortness of human reason makes vision dim. We must follow, however, not human reason, but divine revelation, which assures us that God is not willing that any should perish. It may throw light on the situation to remember that salvation is more than a phrase for post-mortem bliss. It deals primarily with character, and incidentally with destiny. To say that God foreordains men to be profane, licentious, covetous, criminal, is a monstrous blasphemy. It is not less blasphemous to make Him responsible for the damnation of any soul.

Considered positively, predestination is God's pre-arranged plan for man's redemption. This means that God is in control and not controlled. He is a real Deity on the throne. He is not waiting for something to happen. He is not at the mercy of the forces about Him.

It means that salvation is not an accident, a matter of chance, an afterthought, but that before the church was organized, before Christ died on Calvary, before symbolic altars ran in sacrificial blood, before creation and the song of the morning stars, back in the dim depths of His eternal councils, God had a plan.

This plan He follows, and will follow to the end. This does not mean that there is no evolution, no

gradual unfolding, no times when to sense the plan seems to fail; but it does mean that in everything, steadily and majestically, the plan draws ever nearer "to that one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," and this event is not a phase of civilization nor the evolution of a conscience. It is redemption. Predestination is God's changeless and eternal plan for man's redemption.

What, then, is the plan? For the answer, we must go to the Bible, since in the nature of the case the answer must be a revelation. Only God can tell us what He was thinking about before the foundation of the world. Some man may have a notion as to what He should have been thinking about, but the matter worth while is not his notion, but what God has deigned to reveal by His eternal plan. He has probably not revealed all,—just the fringe, but all we need, fully as much as we can take in, certainly enough to fill us with a holy confidence.

It is significant that the two great predestination passages of the Bible were both written by Paul,—one in his letter to the Ephesians, the other in his letter to the Romans. These two passages should be considered together in connection with this subject. In considering the passage in Ephesians, we should keep in mind the situation which redemptive grace confronts in human nature. God's will impinges on a soul "dead in trespasses and in sin." It will not help the discussion to inquire into the cause of this condition, and it will not change the facts either to deny their existence or to denounce their cause. One may be spiritually dead, and not know

it. A story is told that in the days of stout Damascus blades a royal executioner one day cut off a culprit's head, and did it with such skill and deftness that the criminal did not know he was dead. His head retained its position on the trunk, his eyes continued to blink and his lips to twitch, until the executioner put a pinch of snuff to his nose, when the head sneezed and rolled off on the ground!

One may simulate spiritual life without experiencing it. One may be spiritually dead, and still reason, moralize, and even philosophize about religious truths. His dead condition asserts itself whenever the demand is made upon him for the functions of spiritual life. This, then, is the situation which predestination confronts in the individual life—a lost soul absolutely devoid of spiritual initiative. It must therefore in the very nature of the case be “not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

We turn now to the passage in Ephesians where Paul writes: “According as He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise and glory of His grace.” This passage in its entirety answers at least seven great questions about God's plan for man's redemption. These questions are: How old is the plan? Who are included? What does the plan purpose for those who are included? How is

the purpose to be realized? What method is to be employed? What motive is behind it? And what goal is before it?

How old is the plan? It was made "before the foundation of the world." Predestination says that God was thinking about us before we were born, before there was a race or a planet, before sun and stars were made, when all that He had to take into account was His own character. When as yet there was no wreck, no sin, no hell, God said: "I choose to have a family." God has been thinking about man ever since He was God. Man is not an accident, a bit of star-dust thrown off in a cosmos swirl, an atom to rot down in dim centuries. He has been predestined. His being links back to an eternal plan. Let him respect himself.

Who are included? "Us." It is the first and not the second person that is used. Predestination is not something to judge of in your fellow-man, but to discover in yourself. "Having predestinated us,"—not nations, not ages, not circumstances, not forces, but people. Do not try to build a wall through the pronoun. If the wall is to be built, let God build it, but do not get small and sectarian before God's great plan. His heart is infinite. He says: "Whosoever will may come," and He has given but one sign to indicate who are included in His plan. It is the sign of entering. He has chosen all who choose Him. This much we know. What more do we need to know? What more have we a right to know? Why should God fling down the secrets of His eternal councils for unbelievers

to trample under foot? I know that I am included in God's plan when I include myself.

What does the plan purpose for those who are included? "That they should be holy and without blame before Him in love." This does not sound like the knell of doom. It is a summons to glorious life. Someone says: "I want you to grow to be as beautiful as you were when God thought of you first." This is precisely the purpose of God's redemptive plan. His dream is a race "holy and blameless before him in love."

How is the plan to be realized? "In Him." In Christ. Jesus is the fulfilment of the plan. The dream is to reach reality in Him. Christ was not a victim. Calvary was not an accident. The Savior's sacrifice was eternal. It was the theme for discussion in heaven as is revealed to us in the conversation on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the spirits discussed with Christ the decease which He was to accomplish. And so Pilate crucified Christ according to the foreknowledge of God, and the guarantee from the beginning was that Jesus should "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

What was the method to be employed? "The adoption of children" by Christ Himself. Predesination includes the means as well as the end. Into that word "adoption" are packed all the processes of redemption. The method is not that of the workman and the clay, of the judge and the prisoner, but of the father and the child. It is the family method.

What is the motive behind the plan? "According to the good pleasure of His will." We can trust such

a motive. It is changeless, tireless, tender. God's plan depends not on the steadfastness of my purpose, not on the value of my soul, but on "the good pleasure of his will." What can thwart the will of God? Predestination declares that the thing which makes God happy is not to crush, but to save. It is "the good pleasure of his will" that we should be "holy and without blame before him in love."

What is the goal toward which the plan moves? "We are predestinated to the praise of the glory of his grace." God's plan is to glorify Himself, and the trait in Him which will be glorified is not His wisdom, His power, His holiness; but His grace, His unmerited favor. It is the fact that He takes a sinner who has no claim on Him, and plans that he may be "holy" and "blameless." Through the ages, God is vindicating His love. What an hour it will be when the redeemed race shall sing the great anthem of salvation! It will be the glory song, the song that glorifies God's grace. It begins to appear that predestination is not so infamous a doctrine as some have seemed to think.

We turn now to the passage in Romans, which is perhaps the strongest predestination passage in the Bible. There are two things of special importance that it reveals concerning predestination. The first is the doctrines with which it is associated, and the second is the statements of the context.

Just as we can judge of people, so can we of doctrines, by the company they keep. Predestination in Romans is associated with the sublimest doctrines, "for whom he did predestinate, them he also

called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Foreknowledge, calling, justification, glorification, and in the midst of them, predestination; and predestination not merely associated with them, but as the tie that binds them together.

The context to all this is the strongest passage in the Bible on God's inseparable love. "What shall we say to these things?" Paul asks. "Shall we be discouraged? Shall we be afraid? Never. If God be for us, who can be against us?" And then Paul begins a riot of holy joy which does not stop until he falls breathless and exhausted on the steps of the throne in the very blaze of God's undying love. "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Bible's strongest statement of predestination, and also its strongest statement of divine love, are placed side by side, and the two are joined together with the question: "What shall we then say to these things?" Predestination there, and inseparable love here. What shall we say to predestination? Inseparable love. The best thing that can befall the world is the accomplishment of God's will. His plan is wisest, His purpose is the most beneficent. Predestination means that the will of the Lord will be done, for omnipotence is behind it. God's plan will certainly be carried out sooner or later. Delays are not defeats with God. Individuals may reject His

plan, but they cannot thwart His purposes. History's pages but record:

"One death grapple in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the word,
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own."

Such is the Bible doctrine of predestination. God has a will about the world. His will is what it has always been. It is the expression of His love. Its accomplishment is the best that can befall the world, and its accomplishment is sure. Predestination is not a doctrine to defend, but to proclaim. It is a creed to shout from the housetops.

CONCLUSION

Predestination is the bulwark of individualism. The convictions it creates are basic in every battle for the rights of man, as against the clamor and insolence of crowds. It is the most transcendent doctrine ever formulated of the worth of a man. If, from all eternity, God has singled the individual out of the crowd and planned and toiled for his redemption, and said to all the forces that would ignore and oppress and trample him: "Stand aside; I have chosen him!", then whatever may be his station or degree, he takes on a worth that is imperishable, and is invested with a dignity that is immortal. It is not strange, therefore, that the people who through

the centuries have fought the wars for human rights have had predestination in their creed.

It is the doctrine at the heart of Christian assurance. I am confident of my salvation, not because I deserve it, or can earn it, or can achieve it, or can ever suffer enough to obtain it, but because I am persuaded that He Who has begun a good work in me will not leave His work half finished.

Predestination is a doctrine for people who have already been saved. As long as one is unsaved, the gospel says: "Whosoever will may come," but after he has come, what a joy to find that he was expected, that he would always have been missed had he failed to come! One must get inside the church to discover the beauty of a stained glass window. So is it with God's plan. Get inside, and feel His everlasting arms about you, and the decrees will not trouble you. They will comfort you.

From first to last, it is everywhere and always a predestination to privilege. The decrees do not impoverish, but enrich. Instead of destroying, predestination recovers and establishes God's kingdom and character. It substitutes the motives of divine love for those of sin. There is no freedom so great as the freedom to do right.

In carrying out His beneficent plans and accomplishing His holy purposes, God lays under tribute earth and heaven, nations and individuals, nature and grace, time and eternity. In one place we are told that "the times were shortened for the elects' sake." High up above all that transpires, this glorious doctrine soars, proclaiming its victorious

ascendancy over chance and fate, and cheering God's people in battle, discipline, and service with that topmost promise of grace: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Predestination pushes Godward with the destiny of the human race in its keeping. The will of God is the hope of the world. God's face is against sin. He is always found fighting on the side of man's highest good and best happiness. Our only hope of some day coming off conquerors, and more than conquerors is that we have a God Whose will is omnipotent, Whose eye never sleeps, Whose arm never grows weary, and Whose great, loving heart has determined that His people shall at last be victors.

"I say to thee do thou repeat,
To the first man whom thou mayst meet
In lane, highway, or open street,
That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love
As broad as the blue sky above.
That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,
And anguish all are shadows vain,
That death itself shall not remain.
That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways under ground be led,
Yet if we will one guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day.
And we on divers shores now cast
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last."

VIII

INSEPARABLE LOVE—PAUL'S DOCTRINE
OF ASSURANCE

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—ROMANS 8:35-39.

VIII

INSEPARABLE LOVE—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF ASSURANCE

THE closing lines of the eighth chapter of Romans contain the greatest climax of the greatest apostle in his greatest book. It is the sublimest thing Paul ever wrote. He did not regard himself as the greatest apostle, nor even as worthy of being called an apostle, but the world would give him the first place, and rank him at the top of all those who have served under Christ. He wrote thirteen, possibly fourteen, of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. All his epistles are strong, clear, convincing discussions of the truths of Christianity; but if the church were to vote on the question, it would probably elect the epistle to the Romans as Paul's greatest literary production.

In the book there are many passages to fill us with admiration for the richness of Paul's style and the clearness and depth of his thought, and with amazement at the boundless sweep of his spiritual vision. There is nothing, however, greater than the triumphant declaration of divine assurance with which he closes the eighth chapter. It comes in the center of the book. There are sixteen chapters, and this is at the close of the eighth. It is as though everything else in the book sloped up toward this as

toward a sublime summit peak, where the greatest mind of the Christian church in his moment of holiest inspiration uttered his sublimest message. There with the thorn digging into his flesh, with his body scarred with the marks of the cross, with the print of the nails and the wound of the spear, with his face transfigured with the passion of Calvary, the "servant of Jesus Christ" speaks his soul and says: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

THE LOGIC OF IT

How did Paul come to say it? A man cannot write a thing like this offhand. Such things do not drip from the end of a pen behind which sits pampered ease or stolid mediocrity, or even undevout genius. There are plenty of people who might equal Paul's vocabulary and match his diction and measure up to his literary style; but how to make words say things—that is the rub. Paul knew how to harness words to ideas. He knew more. He knew how to make words windows through which to show men the invisible. How does he do it? What is behind this incomparable passage on the love of God?

There is first a matchless chain of logic forged link by link, from premise to conclusion, so that with a premise which cannot be denied, one is tied to a conclusion from which there is no escape. In

this process of reasoning, Paul develops two main lines of thought.

He tracks God's eternal purpose into the shadows of the infinite. He works his way back into the realm "before the world was," and shows how the will of God has always been an expression of His love. He follows with a logic that is as fearless as it is devout the path of divine foreordination, oftentimes where the darkness is blinding and the mystery baffling, until at last he emerges on the everlasting hills, where the sun shines and faith cries: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose!"

Then he pushes through the maze of things to a cross where God's Son is slain from the foundation of the world, and there he stays until he sees what it means, until he sees the veil over the holy of holies rent and the mists lift and the skies clear; until he beholds nail-pierced hands tear away from God's face the disguises woven across it by our sins, and until over the arm of the cross he sees eternal love shining in God's face, and hears the voice which says: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Then as Paul sees where the track of the eternal decrees leads, and as he beholds the vision of Calvary, he finds that they both have the same story to tell,—the story of a God Whose love has never wavered. Then it is that he begins to ask: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" There is no escape from the logic of that hour, and in an ecstasy of assurance, Christ's servant abandons himself to the glory of his conclusion: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

And so Paul wrote this passage on inseparable love because he had a mind great enough to trace God to His eternal council chamber, and a faith keen enough to see the lights that flame on the everlasting hills. It takes brains to write a thing like the closing lines of this victory chapter of the Bible. Let the midget minds which are wont to criticize all they cannot pack into the kit of their appetites tarry in the presence of a master mind and learn something about God. Let the decrepit mentality that deludes itself with a notion that there is intellectual prowess only in doubt, come under the spell of the mind of a man who could think, but whose glory is his faith and whose message is God's love!

This is the first thing behind the passage,—a logic unanswerable. Nothing can separate us from God's love because foreordination has decreed and Calvary has revealed God's changeless, tireless love. There is, however, more here than the conclusion of a great mind. If Paul had been nothing but intellect, he would never have written these lines. It takes brains to write a thing like this, but it takes more than brains; it takes life. We can feel the heart-throb and the life-beat in this passage.

THE EXPERIENCE OF IT

"Christ's servant" came upon this great truth as the result of a life experience. Before he could say that these things could not separate, he had to experience them, and he did.

Before he could say that death cannot separate, he had to die, and he did. He said: "I die daily." He could say: "I am dead and my life is hid with Christ in God." Paul let death embrace him, put its hands upon him, lay its cold and clammy touch upon his soul, sepulture his happiness. Then he climbed out of the coffin and shook off the grave clothes and cried: "Death cannot separate us from God's love!"

Before he could say that life cannot separate us, he had to live, and he did. He lived a full life. His cup brimmed to the lip. He was a man of the world. He knew its temptations, its allurements, its pleasures, its powers, its honors. He held them all in the hollow of his hand and threw them away as he said: "Life cannot separate us from the love of God."

Before he could say that angels cannot separate, he had to match himself against celestial powers, and he did. He wrestled not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers of the air, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. But they could not break nor bend him. They could not terrify his great soul nor shake his confidence, and he came out of the fight holding on to the love of God.

Before he could say things present and things to come cannot separate, he had to sweep life's gamut with his experience, and he did. He was caught up and saw things which it is not lawful to utter. He explored the universe, but he came back from his above-earth adventures saying: "There is nothing up there or out there that can ever separate us from the love of God."

Paul paid a tremendous price to be able to write down this conviction. Read the story of his sufferings and privations, his persecutions and shipwrecks. It was all a part of the price. The reason some people have nothing to say is that they have no experience. When we talk merely from the head, we soon go dumb. It is life that is eloquent. The reason men utter such cheap and stale bromides about God is that they have no experience of Him. They must pay the price. Then the gates of light will swing wide, and words charged with glory like a cloud shot through with sun-set fire will proclaim the beauty of the Lord.

These are the things which go security for the fact of the inseparable love of God,—a logic that cannot be refuted and a life that cannot be answered. This is how Paul wrote his greatest climax. He had a mind fine enough to think God and a faith genuine enough to live God. He discovered God in His most stupendous revelations; and then he lived a life in which the logic of his convictions was wrought into the character of his experience, until at last his great heart could keep its secret no longer. His lips could stay dumb no more. And with a voice whose

tones are like the music of a harp, the great apostle chants the measures of his mighty faith.

THE REALITY OF IT

Let us, however, not become so absorbed with wondering how he wrote it as to be unmindful of what he wrote. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Nothing! Absolutely nothing! No power in heaven or in earth or in sea; no age, no decree, no accident, no calamity; nothing outside ourselves, nothing inside ourselves; no sin, no pit of degradation, no devil, no lake of fire, no wall of darkness, nothing that ever existed or will ever exist, in this or any world, can ever make God stop loving us; can ever "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What can be better than this? Is not this gospel enough? Could there be any gladder news, any higher truth? Let the imagination try to conceive of anything better. Let fancy take its wildest flight, and return and tell us if anywhere it can find the suggestion of anything more precious than the inseparable love of God. This is Paul's great affirmation. It is not a surmise. It is not a dream, a hope, a great perhaps. He says it in the greatest and straightest and strongest way that language can speak.

If man could but accept it, he would hold out against God no longer. He would surrender. He would say: "Here, Lord, I yield, for love has conquered." Indeed, when one has discovered this love; he is saved. "The great transaction's done." So

soon as the sun rises, it is day. And so soon as the light of God's love shines into a human soul, salvation has come.

Some will question and say: "How can God love us when things in the world are as they are? Why is sin here, and trouble, and so much sorrow?" That is what a girl mother said to me one day, as she lifted a pallid, sickly baby from the floor and took me in to see her mother, who for eighteen years had been dying of creeping paralysis, and whose limbs had atrophied, and whose body had shriveled up into a little crumpled, helpless pile of humanity that lay there on the bed. How could all this happen if God loves us? This is the nightmare of faith. Look at the libertine. Is he not separated from God's love? Look at the criminal. Is he not separated? Look at the infidel and the grafter and the hypocrite. Try again, Paul. The facts are against you. You are too much of an enthusiast. How can you say that nothing can separate us from the love of God, when all this is going on?

But he does say it, and this is the glory of it. He does not say that there is no death, and therefore no separation; but that death is here, and that, despite all that it can do, there is no separation. He does not say that there is no temptation, no conflict. He feels the struggle, he sees the grim face of the foe. He hears the roar of the cataract, the flame of the furnace. He is no blind fanatic, but sane and in his right mind. He stares all the horrors of existence full in the face and says: "There they are, but they cannot separate you, they cannot make God

stop loving you, they cannot kill that love nor drive it from the field."

The doubt which assails this faith is false. The hard things of life are no proof that God has stopped loving us; they may be that we have stopped loving God. It is not our love for God but His for us that is inseparable. What shall we say of a mother whose wayward son sins against her love? He has broken her health and her heart. He has emptied the home of joy and is plunging down to hell. Shall we conclude that the mother has stopped loving her son? He may not care for her, but she would still die for him.

This is the story of God's great heart. That libertine is not separated from the love of God. God still loves him. That criminal is not separated. That prodigal is not separated. God has not changed. Our wills and purposes have changed, our habits and loves have altered; but God's love glows like an unspent sun. No night can darken it, no time can tire it, no neglect can wither it, no folly can shame it. It is watching and waiting until the hour when we shall see the shame of sin and the folly of disobedience, and, coming to ourselves, shall arise from our vile habits and shake off the slavery of lust, and with a sob that is half prayer, half song say: "I will go to my Father!"

We need not be afraid of God. We must not grieve Him nor disappoint Him; but we need not be afraid to let God's love have its way. It will not harm us, nor cheat us, nor fail us. It will make the storm a calm, and will bring us to the desired

haven. If we have been tempted to doubt, let us return to this great faith. If because of death or life or circumstances, or things present or things to come, we have been tempted to say that no one cares, let us return to this great faith in a love from which nothing can separate us. Sinking down in the strong arms of that love, and looking up into the face that is ever full of an unwearied tenderness, let my soul say to its Lover: "O, God, I am not afraid of You!"

IX

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY—PAUL'S
DOCTRINE OF GOD'S WORK

"For he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

For the Scripture said unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"—ROMANS 9: 15-24.

IX

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF GOD'S WORK

YOU have seen Niagara. You have seen the river above the falls, broad and strong and swift and shining in the sun. And then you have seen the river take its mighty leap over the falls into the gleaming pool, and go roaring and shouting and fighting its boisterous and belligerent way down the gorge and through the rapids.

The eighth chapter of Romans is like the river above the falls; strong and broad and shining with the changeless love of God; and the ninth chapter is like the river below the falls; full of stormy argument and of the shock of contending ideas. The eighth chapter is the victory chapter of the Bible; we might call the ninth the battle chapter. It opens with a challenge: "I say the truth in Christ; I lie not." Paul has on his fighting mood. He is about to attack one of the darkest and most difficult problems in connection with our thought of God. He plunges into it straight from his ascription to God's inseparable love. With that portrait of God before him, he is afraid of nothing. No problem can daunt him, and no mystery can scare him. He admits at once the seriousness of the question. When he asks:

"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" he means to affirm in the most emphatic way that God has the power.

Once I was talking to an old minister who had just preached on "The Eternal Counsel and Foreknowledge of God" more to the mystification than to the edification of at least one of his hearers. Laying his hand on my shoulder, he said: "I do so love to preach on the deep things of God that nobody can understand." In the ninth chapter of Romans we are soon beyond our depth. As we read these verses, we are forcibly reminded of Peter's remark when he said: "Even as our beloved Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."¹

We must confess that there is much in the ninth chapter of Romans that we do not understand. There are vast stretches we cannot climb. There are peaks which lose themselves in the eternal blue. Nevertheless, this passage was written out of the experience of one of God's saints, and, like other Scripture, is given by inspiration, and must be profitable, that Christ's servant may be thoroughly furnished for his work. While this does not take the mystery from it, it should the fear.

¹ 2 Peter 3:15-16.

THE FEAR

The fear which this passage creates is that of a dumb despair. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" Then why continue to struggle? It seems to proclaim the creed of fatalism. The fear which creeps in like a bleak December blast is that an arbitrary God is in control of human life, and that He holds all in the relentless grasp of a fixed and fatalistic decree, and shapes us to His whims, regardless of our prayers and needs. It is the horror of that paralysis that falls upon the soul which feels itself in the grip of a force which nothing can withstand, from which nothing has a right to hope, and against whose all-powerful persuasion struggle is insanity.

It is the fear which has dogged the steps of the race from the beginning, and which has enthroned itself on the altar of well-nigh every false religion. The Ethnic faiths of the East are fatalistic. A friend who had just returned from a trip through India told me that the thing which most deeply impressed him was the expression of dismal hopelessness in the faces of the people. There was no light-heartedness, no merry laughter of childhood, no gayety, no jubilant songs; but everywhere a look of dumb despair. It is the countenance of a race on whom fatalism has stamped its awful horror.

Sometimes Christianity has been thought to lend itself to this same horror, to present for worship a God Whose sway is so absolute, Whose decree is so

unyielding, and Whose plan is so arbitrary, as practically to make impossible human freedom, and to reduce the soul to the level of a thing. It is this fear which casts its shadow in the ninth chapter of Romans. It tells us that God "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy," and that He "will have compassion on whom he will have compassion." Destiny is merely the whim of the Deity. We fancy we are shaping our ends. We struggle and endure and resist; we climb and contend and battle on; but it is all a pleasant delusion. Everything has been fixed by an arbitrary decree of the Eternal, and our struggles are but the blind battenings of a fly beating out its wings against the window-pane of fate.

It tells us that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." We talk of will-power. We bluster and storm and say:

"Nor fate, nor circumstance, nor chance
Can circumvent or hinder or control
The firm resolve of a determined soul",

but what of it? It is all a harmless pantomime. Our will effects nothing. Around us and above us and within us are forces and influences created by that which is outside of ourselves, which hold the will in a vise, so that what we will is determined for us as certainly as a change of seasons for nature. We talk of running, and wear ourselves out, and grow breathless in the chase, but we are like a child who races up and down the aisle of an express train and imagines he is carrying the train to its destination.

"The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." The old king thought he was running Egypt, but he was mistaken. He was but dough in the hands of fate, but a pawn on the chess-board of destiny. He was doing what the force which rules the world had determined he should do. We are all like Pharaoh. We are doing things, we are running worlds, we are all being kings, presidents, potentates; soldiers, and we are shaping human history. We are doing nothing of the sort. God is running the world according to His own ideas, and "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Such are some of the things which this passage of Scripture seems to say.

If all this be true, why struggle on? Why keep up the silly pantomime? If this be true, what right has this arbitrary God to find fault with our failures and shortcomings? He is responsible, not we. Shall He Who formed us say to the thing He has formed: "Why art thou thus?" Let Him ask Himself that question, for it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.

Yonder is one who has never accepted Christ. He has heard the gospel message, but he has never yielded to its sweet persuasions. His stubborn will has held out against the overtures of love. But do not blame him. He cannot help himself. "It is not of him that willeth."

Yonder is a Christian, cold, indifferent, irrespon-

sive, inactive, dwarfed, and stunted, backsliding and tumbling down, a reproach to the church and a stumbling-block in the way of those who would come to the cross. But do not blame him. "Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?"

There is some victim of vice, a degenerate, an alcoholic, a drug victim, a black sheep, stained, condemned, discredited, despised. But do not blame him. He cannot help himself. He is like Pharaoh. For this very purpose has God raised him up, that He might show His power in him.

Yonder is a murderer, a thief, an anarchist, an enemy of society. The penalty is pronounced and the punishment is inflicted. But why? If one is brutal and dishonest, it is because he was made that way. It is as natural for him to commit crime as for the priest to pray, or a good woman to give alms to the poor. There are different plants in the garden. There are rank weeds and graceful lilies and belligerent thistles, but they are all the products of the same force. They may bewail their lot and station, like the woman who had found out herself and who cried: "O, Lord, I am a goat," but they and we are what we are because the potter has power over the clay.

If we are disposed to protest against such an administration, and say: "It is not fair; it is a travesty on justice, it is the mockery of existence," we are promptly silenced with the remark: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall

the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" What is left but a dumb despair? Man is but a handful of dust along the road of life, a grain of sand in the desert, a worm burrowing its blind way into a clod, an insect crawling on a leaf, a drop of dew, a bit of stardust on the path of the ages.

IS THIS CHRISTIANITY?

Can it be possible that this is the teaching of the Christian religion? Can it be that this is the gospel which has been handed down to us for our guidance in life and our comfort in death? Can it be that to reveal this the Bible was written; that to make this known, God incarnated Himself and ministered and atoned; that to preach it, a ministry was ordained and temples built and altars lit, and all just to say that human beings must submit to the inevitable? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Can it be that this is the mission of the cross, that for this the Son of God came and lived and suffered and taught and died? Was it all just that Jesus might say to men that God's rule is so absolute that "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth"?

Was it for this that the silence was broken and the gospel invitation uttered? Is this all that Isaiah meant when he said: "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"? Was it what

Jesus meant when He stood on the last great day of the feast and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"? Was it what John meant when in the closing chapter of the New Testament he writes: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"? Is it all nothing but rhetoric? It is all true if man can come, but if he cannot come, it is worse than sounding brass. And does it not say that he cannot come; that before he can come, the potter who has power over the clay must enable him to come? The feeling that he can come is just a pleasant delusion. Can this be Christianity? What shall we answer? Yes or no?

No, it is not Christianity in so far as it challenges the gospel invitation. We cannot believe that God would toil for centuries to save a soul, would fill history with His presence, would write a Bible, and send His Son, and consecrate the cross, and pour out His spirit, and raise up the church, all that the gospel invitation might be uttered and salvation brought to a man's door; and then deliberately make it impossible for the man to receive what He has brought. It is inconceivable that God would thus nullify His own work. It is absurd and worse to conclude that He would thus block the way and defeat Himself in all that He has been seeking to accomplish. No logic can convince us of the truth of such a lie.

To accept any such conception of God would be to make Him the colossal horror of the world, to make

religion a mockery, and murder a phase of innocence, and crime an introduction to virtue. It would be to make morality meaningless and vice sacramental. If everything is fixed by an unalterable decree, so that man is but a shuttlecock in the loom of fate, existence is a nightmare and self-murder without blame; the gospel invitation is insincere and whatever teaches otherwise must be false. No interpretation of Christianity is true that brands with insincerity the gospel invitation.

We must, however, answer: "Yes, Christianity is all of this," so far as it is a revelation of the supreme and sovereign power of Almighty God. Christianity does not substitute a weak and vacillating and emotional deity for that august power whose stern features the ancient creeds of fatalism dimly outlined against their gloomy sky. God is a real God. He is in control. His plans are not afterthoughts. His measures are not makeshifts. He knows all from the beginning, and He knows it because He has determined it. The potter has power over the clay. We see it in nature. God can make a lump of coal into a gleaming diamond. The processes of grace are not inferior to His processes in nature.

This thought which has been slumbering in the heart of the race of a God Who cannot be baffled, Whose power cannot be thwarted, and Whose intelligence cannot be duped, is not a lie. God is all this. He is a real God, and not a paper divinity. Every syllable in this ninth chapter about God's work is true, and true to the uttermost. What Christianity does is not to diminish God, to offer the world a

petty and petulant divinity, to make a god out of a man, or to try to make him out of his works. What Christianity does is to change the dumb despair of fatalism into the triumphant confidence of Christian faith; and it does this, not by stripping Jehovah of His sovereignty, not by tearing down omnipotence and omniscience and omnipresence, but by its revelation of the character of God.

THE POTTER

Christianity's supreme revelation is its story of the character of God. It is all to show what God is. This is the purpose of the Bible. It lights up the darkness about man's thought of his Maker. This is the purpose of the cross. Jesus came to tell us the story of God. He is "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person."¹ What is the revelation? It is that God is good. It is that God is love. It is that the potter is none other than our Father. It is that God is not willing that one of His little ones should perish. Is it not significant that before he writes this ninth chapter of Romans on God's work, Paul should write the closing verses of the eighth chapter on God's inseparable love? It is as though he would stamp this fact of God's character on our conception so that never again would it be possible for us to think of God without thinking of His love. It is as though he would say to us: "I am going to open the door into the room where God does His work, but before you see Him at work, I want you to see Him." God

¹ Hebrews 1:3.

is under the necessity of being Himself. There is no escape from that. This is the supreme necessity of the world. It is stamped on every law of nature, into every principle of morality and truth of religion, into all the plans and purposes and thoughts and activities of the Deity. God can never get away from Himself. You and I cannot do that, but we are finite. God is infinite. He fills the world. Where could He go to escape Himself? He must be Himself in every corner and crevice, in every fact and change, in every epoch and instant of His vast universe. He must be Himself, and He is our Father.

Think of this as you study the potter at the wheel. The God Who controls everything is the God of the inseparable, infinite, changeless love. This is the force which holds all in its grip. If so, where is any room for fear?

He says: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Shall that throw us into despair when our Father says it? It is not an announcement of doom, but a door to privilege.

He says: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Tired soul, how that falls on the ear like the music of heaven! We struggle, but fall weary, and the kind God lifts His tired child in His arms and carries him on His bosom. Even this passage about Pharaoh is lit with hope, for it is something to have God use us, even though we be unfit. God uses us even in our surly and ugly moods, and that is bet-

ter than to be thrown on the slag dump. You cannot get out of this potter's hand. Even when the clay is gritty and dry, He does not cast it away. He can make something out of the worst of us.

Will you say, then: "Why doth he yet find fault?" "Nay, but, O, man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Say rather: "O, God, have Thy way with me. Leave me not to my poor wits for a moment."

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare,
Never grudge the throw!"¹

The Potter will not mar His work. There is an old story of an earthly potter who at a critical moment flung his body into the furnace and fed the fires with himself lest his work should perish. It is what God did in the Person of His Son on the cross, where divine love laid down its life "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." He may make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor, one for a high service and another for an humble service; but these are relative terms. If He makes it for any use that pleases Him, that is honor enough. If He thinks enough of my life to shape it on His wheel, I am happy!

¹ Browning.

"All I could never be,
 All, men ignored in me,
 This, I was worth to God, Whose wheel
 The pitcher shaped."¹

This is the one and only sufficient and satisfying solution of the problem of "the potter and the clay,"—the character of God. Back of all of God's dealings with us is His character, and His character is love. That beats all philosophies and theologies. That retires all man-made explanations and apologies for God. How often do we feel as Job did when his three friends tried to comfort him! They climbed on the ash heap and sat down and mourned with him, and then undertook to explain to him why his troubles had come upon him. As Job listened to their drivel, the explanations were a greater calamity than the troubles they tried to explain, until at last, exasperated beyond endurance, Job said: "I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end?" It was a polite way of saying: "You make me tired. Shut up. I have heard enough!" The book of Job is a good commentary on the background of the subject Paul discusses in the ninth chapter of Romans.

THE FEAR GONE

And so this passage, instead of being our despair, becomes our glorious hope. I do not fear the Potter. I do not shrink from the touch of His hand on this clay soul of mine. I rejoice that my salvation does

¹ Browning.

not depend on myself, and that I am not left to fight temptation single-handed and alone, for I should fail. I am happy that the world is not in the hands of a few million weak, fallible, clay mortals, but of One Whose power never breaks down, and Who does not stop until His work is perfect.

But someone is asking what becomes of human freedom. For one, I want no freedom which takes me out of God's hand, which would imperil His sway over my life, even if it were possible. But that this does not reduce man to an automaton is evident. Paul would emphasize this before he lets the chapter close. In the last verse he flings the door of opportunity wide open in the face of man's will, and says: "And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

He is, however, not discussing human freedom in this chapter, but God's work. When he gets to the twelfth chapter, he is ready to pay his respects to free agency, and he begins by saying: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

If Paul's creed is stark fatalism, this exhortation is rank idiocy. Paul's experience seemed to rise high enough to see that God's sovereignty and man's freedom harmonize. Few of us reach those heights, but it is something to have the testimony of a man

who has. Freedom is God-given. The Potter shapes it into the clay. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." God's sovereignty, instead of imperiling, guarantees man's freedom.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay?" Yes, but I do not fear it. I hope it. It does not make me despondent; it makes me happy. It does not jeopardize heaven; it insures it. We are the clay, and God is our Potter, and so the future is secure. The world is moving toward the light. God is not a demon bent on our ruin, but our Father with His arms around us. Let us trust Him and dismiss our fears and rest in peace.

Let us go with hope along the way, saying with Rabbi Ben Ezra:

"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith: 'A whole I planned,'
Youth shows but half; trust God,
See all, nor be afraid."¹

¹ Browning.

X

THE ALIEN—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF THE
RACES

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."—ROMANS 10:1-4.

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."—ROMANS 10:12, 13.

X

THE ALIEN—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF THE RACES

THE problem of the races is and has always been a problem packed with peril. It is invested at once with so much that is good and so much that is bad, with such a mixture of patriotism and provincialism, that it becomes easy to mistake wrong for right and to sanctify iniquity under the guise of serving virtue.

If we could get at the real cause of human injustice and unrest, we should probably find the most prolific source in racial antagonisms and suspicions. Christ's plea for unity and the subsequent teachings of His apostles based on Christ's plea and enjoining the rule of good-will, are all aimed not so much at ecclesiastical as at racial divisions. Indeed, if racial antagonisms could be cured, ecclesiastical divisions would be greatly reduced. A close study of that storm center of human unrest among the little nations in the Near East, Turkey and the Balkan States, will discover that the troubles there have been more racial than religious.

Paul grew up and was educated in this atmosphere of the Near East. His thinking was saturated with the clamor and strife incident to the problem of the races. He is prepared, therefore, out of his own

experience to estimate the problem, and also to tell us whether the gospel furnishes an adequate solution. If the gospel could lift him out of the narrow suspicions and intense jealousies of race hate into cosmopolitan sympathies and international concern, we may be sure it can furnish a solution for the problem of the races.

If there be one characteristic of Paul's experience as a Christian that is significant and arresting, it is its bigness. He seemed to leap at a bound from a provincial into a citizen of the world. His very title, "Apostle to the Gentiles," is revealing. In what Paul has to say in Romans about the Jew and the Gentile, he is making his approach to this problem, until in the twelfth verse of the tenth chapter he announces the cure: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." That is the way "a servant of Jesus Christ" thinks of the races.

As we turn now to consider this problem as it inheres in the modern world, and especially as it affects our American life, let us keep this great Christian principle in mind. Many causes have been suggested for the great war. When the skies have sufficiently cleared, and we have gotten far enough away for an accurate historical perspective, it will not be strange should we discover that, while occasions were many, the real cause of the great war was deep-seated, age-long, blood-thick, race-antagonisms.

Certainly it is true that here in America there is

no more pressing problem that confronts the nation and the church.

The question of the alien is a burning question in America to-day, not only because of the war scare, not only because of pending immigration legislation, not only because of the largely increased immigration which will probably come to our shores after the war is over; but for other reasons which will appear as we proceed. Therefore, in embarking upon a sea of discussion where the waters are as stormy and the fogs as thick as they are in this subject, it is well to be careful about the anchor. It is wise for us to tie up to some great fact or truth which is stable and permanent, a truth to which we may hold through thick and thin, through night and light, through all the passions and prejudices, the tumults and perplexities of this question of the races. There is no better truth for an anchor than this fundamental truth out of Paul's experience.

The gravest, greatest, most ominous, most unsolved problem which confronts the American nation to-day is not the problem of trusts, or labor unions, or tariff revision, or predatory wealth, or railroad rates, or forest preserves, or the regulation and suppression of the liquor traffic, or food riots and the high cost of living. It is the problem of immigration, of the aliens in America, of foreign-born and -bred citizens who have come to this land to better their condition, and whose attachment to America is, primarily at least, a bread-and-butter attachment.

It is at once a political, a financial, an industrial,

an economic, an educational, a social, an ethical, and a religious problem. It is a problem into which are packed all other problems and its proportions are growing by leaps and bounds and daily becoming more threatening. There is no problem at once so portentous and so promising, so full of hope and so freighted with despair. In it lurk calamity and disaster to the republic, and in it reside reserves of racial vigor and primitive independence which may flush the anæmic veins of the nation with a fresh supply of the red blood of true patriotism. As we confront the problem, shall it be with fear or hope? Shall we say that the night is at hand, or that the morning cometh?

THE MENACE

There can be no doubt about the menace of the alien to America. The size of the stream of immigration is itself a menace. It is colossal. Before the war began, a million and a quarter were pouring in upon us every year. In five years we were getting enough people from Continental Europe to settle all Canada at the present population. Since 1820, some twenty-five millions of foreigners have settled in the United States. It is estimated that forty per cent of the present population is either foreign-born or the children of foreign-born parents. After the war is over, the tide is likely largely to increase. Immigration is just starting from the Orient, and when the peoples of those lands begin to swarm our shores as do now the people from Southern Europe, the size of the immigration problem will be doubled.

Immigration is practically unrestricted. Only about ten thousand a year are turned back. True, this means ten thousand tragedies,—ten thousand broken hearts, ten thousand men and women whose eyes have caught sight of the land of promise, and who have then been driven back to wander in the wilderness until they die. But what are ten thousand among a million? And this number will probably increase in the not distant future, unless checked by legislation.

Other considerations increase the menace. The character of immigration is far from the best. In the last fifteen years it has changed almost entirely. Formerly large numbers came from Germany, from the nations of Northern Europe, and from Great Britain. Now it is largely from Southern Europe, from Austria and Russia, sixty-six per cent of our immigrants coming from these countries. Fully one-fourth of them can neither read nor write. They are industrial incompetents. They are desirable neither for their native land to retain nor for their adopted land to acquire. This means that America is becoming a slum for Southern Europe.

The ease with which the alien is clothed with citizenship adds to the menace. It takes twenty-one years for a native-born American to acquire the right to vote. The alien may get it in five years, sometimes less. Not infrequently his five years of schooling in American institutions leaves him as unfit to exercise suffrage as an American child of the same term of residence. Yet his ballot counts for as much in settling the destiny of the republic

as that of the President. This may be glorious democracy, but is it sane patriotism?

The alien settles for the most part in largely congested centers of population. This packs the plague spots with peril. New York, Pennsylvania, and the Northern Atlantic States have recently been getting ninety-five per cent of the immigration. These people come from nations that do not easily assimilate. The people have false notions of liberty. On the voyage over, the few remaining restraints are broken.

This is the problem. It is gigantic. There has never been anything equal to it in the history of the race. It is not whether these people should come. They are coming. They are already here. We must grapple with the problem. We must conquer it, or it will destroy us.

AMERICA AFFECTED

It is inevitable that this large alien population should profoundly affect America. There is a careless, easy-going optimism which flies the flag on the Fourth of July, and imagines the country is saved; which places a few flowers on the graves of the old soldiers on Memorial Day, and concludes it is patriotic; which gives some money once a year to Home Missions, and feels it has discharged its religious duty to the nation. It is an optimism that refuses to see difficulties. One of the American vices is to think that nothing can hurt America. It is a popular faith, as someone has said, that God takes care of children, fools, and the United States.

It is, however, impossible for a nation to receive so large an influx of population and stay unchanged. The fact that ours is a new government makes the matter all the more serious. We are as yet a nation in the making. As well think of discharging the filthy sewers of a city into a crystal stream and expect the waters to stay clean and sweet as to discharge annually this tidal wave of social drift from the slums of Europe into America and the nation not feel it.

As a matter of fact, it is hurting us. The alien is affecting America. He is affecting our politics. He influences the labor question, home life, and social and religious matters. In some cases he threatens our institutions. The peril to the Sabbath is largely a peril that has been unloaded on us from Continental Europe. It is very nice to talk about the glory of our free institutions, but declamation will not preserve them. No one who seriously studies the situation can doubt the truth of the statement that a grave, if not the gravest, peril which threatens our national future is at Ellis Island. What shall we do about it? Joseph Cook once said: "Unrestricted immigration is doing much to cause deterioration in the quality of American citizenship. Let us resolve that America shall be neither a hermit nation nor a Botany Bay. Let us make our land a home for the oppressed of all nations, but not a dumping-ground for the criminals, the paupers, the cripples, and the illiterate of the world. Let our republic in its crowded and hazardous future adopt these watchwords, to be made good all along our

continental and oceanic borders: 'Welcome for the worthy, protection to the patriotic, but no shelter in America for those who would destroy the American shelter itself.'"

If the worst comes to the worst, we must close the gates. This has been the view of some of our most patriotic leaders. Washington questioned the advisability of admitting any more immigrants except such tradesmen as were needed to develop the country. Jefferson wished "there were an ocean of fire between this country and Europe, so that it might be impossible for any more immigrants to come hither." Roosevelt says: "I do not think that any immigrant who will lower the standard of life among our people should be admitted." Phillips Brooks said: "If the hope which this country holds out to the human race of permanent and stable government is to be impaired by the enormous and unregulated inroad of poverty and ignorance which changed conditions of transportation have brought upon us, then for the sake of Europe as well as for the sake of America, the coming of these people should be checked and regulated until we can handle the problems that are already facing us." We are familiar with President Wilson's recent utterances on the subject.

And yet closing the gate is really no solution. It is like locking the cell after the culprit has escaped. The alien is already here. Besides, is it a Christian solution? Does it harmonize with the doctrine Paul taught centuries ago, and which is fundamental to Christianity, when he said: "There is no difference

between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him"?

America cannot, if it would, be a hermit nation. The day is past for any people to bar themselves off from the rest of mankind. In these days of wireless telegraphy and aërial navigation and universal language, the pulse-beat of the race kin cannot be ignored. There are no longer any desert solitudes. The races have become the people.

Barring the gate is not solving the problem. It is evading it. Shutting your eyes does not diminish the trouble in the world. You have not solved the problem of poverty when you have barred your door to the street and sat down with wife and children around a bountiful table. What of the poverty that is still crying in the street and moaning in the hovel and weeping in rags and want? What of the faces that are black with the marks of the plague, and the homes that are crouching under the fear of a stalking horror? Shutting your eyes and barring the door and closing the gate is no solution of the problem of the thronging people,—certainly not to one who has felt his pulses beat with love of humanity, and who has made Paul's great doctrine his creed!

There is but one solution of the problem, and that solution is not exclusion, but assimilation. These foreigners must be taken up into our national life and made a part of us. They must be made Americans. We do not want America to become another Italy, or a second Russia, or a Western Germany, or even a new England. The millions who seek a new home under the Stars and Stripes, if we are

to bless each other, must be of us as well as among us. Assimilation is the solution, and it is to be brought about, not by legislation, not chiefly by education, but pre-eminently by religion.

THE ALIEN MUST BE CHRISTIANIZED

The problem can be solved only by the gospel of Christ. We are not afraid of any shipload of foreigners who come to us loyal to the cross of Christ. They cannot come too soon or too often. We welcome them. If they are Christians, we are willing to trust them with our institutions as freely as we trust ourselves. But what if they are not Christians? What if they are only nominal Christians? Is it not evident that our salvation as a nation depends upon our making them Christians? There is a stronger bond than love of country. It is love of Christ. And when men find Christ they are one, "though they come from the ends of the earth."

Therefore, this question is a great missionary problem. It rises up before us. It is imperative. In what is no doubt a providence, God has brought the ends of the earth to us. We were slow in taking the gospel to them. The Savior Who talked to His disciples about ripe harvest fields and said: "Go ye into all the earth," seems now to be saying: "I have waited long, but my people are slow to go. After nineteen hundred years, two-thirds of the world are without the gospel. I will bring the nations to my people." They are here at our doors. It is a glorious missionary opportunity. Shame on

us if we back down at such a crisis, and run to cover under the mask of playing patriotic to America!

The success or failure of Foreign Missions is going to be settled here at home. If we cannot Christianize the heathen in a Christian country, we will never do it in a heathen country. God has driven us into a corner, and is saying to the church: "Now do your duty or die!" There never was a greater opportunity than that which now confronts Protestant Christianity in America. Every motive of home missionary zeal and foreign missionary enthusiasm, as well as love of country, is packed into the call to evangelize the alien. And the alien is convertible. He can be Christianized. Christ is not only "the power of God unto salvation" to Sons of the American Revolution, to Colonial Dames, to Daughters of the Confederacy, to members of the Grand Army of the Republic, but to the Italian in the ditch, to the Hungarian in the coal mine, to the Pole in the packing-house, to the Jew from the steppes of Russia, to the Hindu from the filth of India. The tide of immigration rolls in, carrying on its crest a matchless opportunity to the Christian church!

Are we meeting it? What does the immigrant think of our Christianity? Does it impress him? Does he believe that we believe it? Do we give him Christian treatment? Not always. A Ruthenian priest says: "My people do not live in America. They live underneath America. America goes on over their heads. My people do not love America.

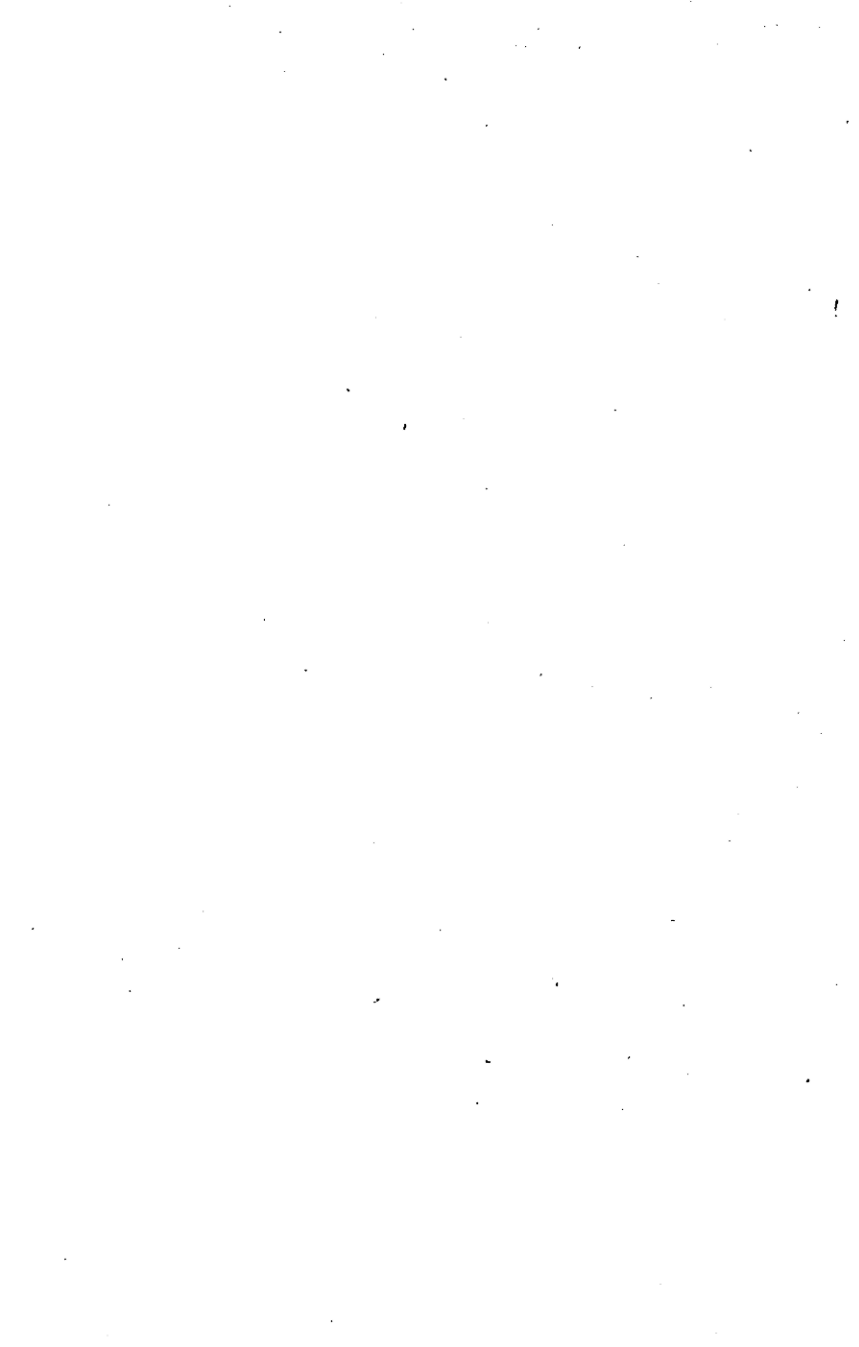
Why should they from what they see of it?" The wretchedness of many of these aliens in a strange land is enough to move to pity the sternest of that guild whose shibboleth is: "America for the Americans!" "Talk of Dante's hell," said General Booth, "and all the horrors and cruelties of the lost! The man who walks with open eyes and bleeding heart through the shambles of our civilization needs no such fantastic images of the poet to teach him horror!"

Instead of meeting it, we are frequently running away from it. What is the meaning of the flight of churches up town? Is it a strategic advance or a masterly retreat? Are there no people down town? There are nowhere so many people, but they are not our sort of people! Shame on us! We have thought more of preserving a respectable congregation of rich pew-holders than of saving the alien. Despite all our highflown rhetoric about loving America, we are more concerned with protecting ourselves.

Only Christianity can solve the problem, but it will take a new brand of Christianity,—not this formal, faint-hearted, self-indulgent, dress-parade Christianity, but one that can stand bad smells and foul sights, and go down to the gates of hell to save a lost soul,—that has enough of Christ in it to love iniquity into goodness, and hostility into brotherhood!

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." That is the way the serv-

ants of Jesus Christ in this age and in this land must think of the races; and when we do, the age of hate will be over, and men will think of war as a horror they need fear no more forever!



XI

A STUMBLE BUT NOT A FALL—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE

"I say, then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."—ROMANS II:1.

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."—ROMANS II:5, 6.

"I say, then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."—ROMANS II:11.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."—ROMANS II:26.

XI

A STUMBLE BUT NOT A FALL—PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE

IN giving his estimate of the type of character developed in the student life of Northfield, a college president is reported to have paid these students this tribute: "They endure to the end." It is this quality, translated into Christian experience, that we are to consider in this chapter.

If Christ's servant is to stick to his task, he must believe not only that what he does is worth while, but that what he does is forever. He must write into his creed what some Christians have called "the final perseverance of the saints," and others, "the final preservation of the saints," and still others, "the final perseverance of God's grace," but which translated into the language of Christian experience means that God does not do imperfect work in the soul's salvation.

Paul believed that God's work in man's soul is indestructible. Because of this conviction, he could say: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." This sublime belief sustained and steadied him in his life of service, as it has those in all ages who have wrought well for God and man.

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This doctrine of perseverance he develops in the eleventh chapter of Romans in his study of God's dealings with His chosen people. He says: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. . . . I say, then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid."

THE JEW AND PERSEVERANCE

Paul is writing to the Romans about the Jews. He is not writing with that prejudice which for ages has dogged the steps of the Jew wherever he has gone. Being himself a Jew, Paul had none of that hatred of the Jew which some Christians in all generations have seemed to regard as a most Christian hatred. Because Christ's persecutors said: "His blood be on us, and on our children,"¹ it has been the creed of many Christians to regard and treat the Jew as a social and religious outcast. They have felt that they would be disloyal to Christ were they to act differently. An old lady in Virginia once said to the writer that she hated snakes as a matter of conscience. She admitted that some snakes were harmless, but she remembered what the Bible said about enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and she did not see how any good Christian could have anything but a feeling of hatred to snakes. For very much the same kind of reason, there are people who make it a matter of conscience to cherish a feeling of aversion to the Jew. But the feeling is wrong. It is most un-Christian. It can have no place in a life of service.

¹ Matt. 27:25.

It is far from the teachings and spirit of the gentle Christ, Who on the cross prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Paul admits that the Jews have stumbled. They made a colossal blunder in rejecting Christ, in failing to recognize Him as the Messiah. This blunder was fatal to their national growth. The Jews were distinctively a religious nation. The Greek gave the world culture; the Roman, law; but the Jew, religion. The amazing spectacle which the Jew presents to-day is that of the most religious race of time without a religious message. The old divine note has dwindled down into a philanthropic or humanitarian impulse. The Jew has a zeal, but not according to knowledge. He is without a mission because without a message. He stumbled at the cross. While God has blessed this false step of His chosen people to the bringing in of the Gentiles, the result to the Jew has been unspeakably disastrous. As one of their most learned and distinguished rabbis remarked, after a visit to the Holy Land and a careful study of the whole question of Jewish nationalism: "The only hope for the Jew is Jesus."

While they have stumbled, it is not that they should fall, it is not that they should be utterly cast off. God thinks as much of a Jew as He ever did. The Jews are no less God's chosen people now than in the ancient times. Some day they will turn to Christ. The prediction is unmistakable. Their apostasy is in part and but for a time. Their spiritual blindness is neither total nor permanent.

To-day many Jews, while not accepting the dogmas about Christ's person, are powerfully influenced by both His teachings and spirit. Multitudes of them are not far from the kingdom. The veil is still there, but some day it will be taken away from their faces, and they shall look on Him Whom they have pierced, and discover there the features of their glorious Messiah.

One morning at daybreak, I stood with some friends on the summit of the Grandfather Mountain in Western North Carolina. We had spent the night on top to be ready for the view, but when we awoke, the mist covered everything. We could not see each other ten feet distant. The wind was blowing a gale as we stood there on the big rock that points the mountain peak, and waited. Somewhere out there beyond the cloud that swathed us, the sun was shining and the green fields lay in its radiant light, but it was all hidden from us. We waited. Would the mist lift? Would the sun scatter the cloud? As we waited and watched, suddenly the wind tore a great hole in the cloud, and we saw the world! Thus it will be some day with the mists which veil the eyes of God's ancient Israel. The winds of God's will shall tear open the cloud, the veil shall be rent in twain, and the Jews shall see Jesus.

That will be the great day on earth for the kingdom of Christ. It will be a "fullness of time." Then the Jews will come into their own. They will be re-baptized with the ancient fire and the old-time enthusiasm. Then they will have a message and a

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mission, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. Then there will be no regret among any nation at the presence of so large a Jewish population among them. Then the million Jews in New York will not be the city's problem, but its salvation. When the Jews shall claim as their own the Jesus Who has always belonged to them, the church will feel a new thrill as it sings its coronation hymn, and says:

"Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall."

Christ's servants must believe in the ultimate Christianization of Israel. They must pray and toil for it. Because here and there a Jew who has professed Christ turns out to be a convert for revenue only, we must not conclude that the Jew has stumbled that he should fall. In accepting Christ, he must face hardship and ostracism, but let him not despair. A converted Jew is not one who has disgraced himself. Paul was a converted Jew. So also were the other apostles. And so, some day, "shall all Israel be saved."

THE CHRISTIAN AND PERSEVERANCE

Paul is also writing to the Romans about the Christians. He would make a race-wide application of this phase of the national life of his own people. He would make God's dealings with the Jews an interpretation of His dealings with His people of all nations and ages. The story of the religious development of the Hebrew people is a portrayal in large outline of the religious development of the indi-

vidual. This is what makes the Old Testament so valuable. All that is recorded there writes itself down in every life that feels after and seeks for God.

The Christian stumbles. That he does would amaze us, but for the fact that its frequency has made it the most commonplace incident of life. It would seem that a converted man would let sin alone and walk straight and live right. It would seem that after one has seen what it cost to redeem him, after he has looked upon the ignominy and ruin of sin in the light of the cross, after he has learned its terrible penalty in the sufferings of Calvary, he would be done with sin forever. How can a man ever go back to that hell? How can he ever get his consent to commit an act against which the cross cries out? It would seem that forgiveness must cure the soul of that folly and that redemption would carry with it complete and permanent emancipation. It does not. The Christian stumbles, and we have grown so used to it that we expect it. We do not expect anything else. It is a part of the regular program.

And yet it is no part of God's plan that His child should stumble and blunder on toward heaven. He not only saves from sin, but from sinning. "They shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." He expects us to quit doing wrong, and to do right. God does not tempt any man to sin. There is no license in grace for indulgence in transgression. Christ died on the cross not merely to make us immune from the penalty of sin,

but to deliver us from the desire to sin. True, Paul speaks of a conflict. He says: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Some conclude that because he felt this way, all Christians should. Therefore they camp in the seventh chapter of Romans, and their experience terminates in a wail over temptation. But Paul wrote the eighth chapter of Romans also, the victory chapter of the Bible, in which he asks: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" There is where God expects His children to live. He wrote the tenth chapter, too, the assurance chapter, in which he reminds us that a stumble is not a fall, and in which he declares for the final redemption of God's chosen ones. That is what God expects us to claim.

God wants us to be perfect. The standard He sets is faultless. The goal of the divine purpose is not a discord, but a harmony; it is not a defeat, but a victory; it is not a blemish, but perfection. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." While from the human standpoint this standard of perfection is impossible, shall we call it impossible from the divine standpoint? Are we ready to admit that sin is ever a necessity? It is actual, but is it necessary? It was not necessary for Jesus to sin. Sin was neither necessary nor actual with Him, because He met it in the might of God. Are not all the spiritual resources with which

He met sin at our disposal? To say that He used His Godhood to protect Himself against temptation is to make Him an actor, and to brand Calvary with insincerity. God's standard is impossible only when God is left out.

But we disappoint God. Christians are not sinless. Despite repentance, forgiveness, regeneration and the sublime hopes of heaven, somehow we keep on stumbling. "No mere man since the fall is able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed." We keep on living in the seventh chapter of Romans. There are no sinless people. Some claim it, but their claims would not bring ten per cent of their face value in any market of public opinion. There is no more characteristic story of Mr. D. L. Moody than that which relates how a man stopped at his gate yonder one day and said to the great evangelist and student of human nature: "I am completely sanctified. I am purged from all sin." "We will ask your wife about it," was the laconic reply with which Mr. Moody jolted him out of his fool's paradise.

Sometimes stumbling is notorious. The inconsistencies of professing Christians become common town talk. They are in the straight and narrow way, but they find it hard to keep their feet there. The pilgrim journey becomes a succession of slides in the wrong direction. Instead of walking erect, the saint staggers. It is remarkable what people will consent to do, and yet claim to be Christians. Claiming God as their Father and Christ as their Savior

and heaven as their home, they cover themselves with the ruin of the Ten Commandments.

Are we to conclude from all this that Christianity is a fraud? God forbid! Shall we say that salvation is a sham and the Bible false? So some reason, but it is not a fair inference; it would be as sane to brand the laws of a state as criminal because there are some people in the penitentiary.

Shall we conclude that there is no such person as a genuine Christian? God forbid! Shall we say that since men stumble toward heaven, the heavenly goal is itself infamous? So some reason, but their logic is vicious. Jacob stumbled, but God is known as the God of Jacob. David stumbled, but he was a man after God's heart. Peter stumbled, but he lived to write two of the books of the Bible.

Shall we conclude that he who stumbles was mistaken when he thought he was saved? God forbid! Yonder is a man who becomes a Christian. He sincerely repents, confesses his sins, accepts Christ, professes Him before men, and enters on Christian service. One day he stumbles, does wrong, and yields to temptation. Are we to conclude that because he stumbled, he never started; that because he has fallen into sin, he has never been forgiven? That is precisely what Satan wants him to believe, but it is a lie; one of the worst, the most insidious and dangerous that assails the spiritual life; and a lie that leads to the blackest and forlornest pit of hell.

A STUMBLE IS NOT A FALL

The Christian does not stumble that he should fall. When one has sincerely repented of sin and accepted Christ as his Savior, and then stumbles, he is not to conclude that there is no efficacy in Christianity, any more than a sick man who takes one dose of the doctor's medicine and quits is to conclude that the doctor is a quack. Neither is he to conclude that Christ is without power to save. He has saved others. The fact that He has saved one soul from sin is the Savior's sufficient certificate. Nevertheless, just as an engine may be on the track, but powerless to run until the steam is up, so salvation calls for more than justification. It would seem that one may be delivered from condemnation, and yet stop short of a life of privilege and power.

Neither is he to conclude that prayer is unanswered any more than he is to conclude that the power-house is in ruins when the connection is broken. Sin breaks the connection. It is a non-conductor of spiritual power.

Certainly he must not conclude that he is unsaved; that because he has yielded to temptation, his soul is lost; that because he has stumbled, he has fallen; that because he has again stained his life with sin, Calvary has lost its efficacy. "He that is cleansed needeth not save to wash his feet." Stumbling is an affair of the feet rather than of the head or the heart. It is serious, but not necessarily fatal.

Salvation, once it is ours through Christ, is a

permanent asset. The Good Shepherd says of His sheep: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

The Bible teaching on this subject is that the Christian may stumble into sin, but he is still God's child, as much as your child is yours even though he may sometimes disobey you. Christ's work is not imperfect, and every Christian may speak in the terms of Paul's experience and say: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." We do not keep ourselves. We are "kept." And therein heaven is secure. What, then, is the harm of stumbling? What damage can sin do? Much in every way. No sin was ever harmless nor devoid of penalty.

The sins of the Christian grieve Christ. This alone is enough to make us hate sin. The son who affected to love his mother, but who neglected her shamefully, made a claim for which no one had any respect. Our sins discredit the Savior. They injure His cause. Are we willing to bring reproach on that dear name? We may sing "Sweetest name on mortal tongue," but if our misdeeds cover the name with shame, the song slanders Christ. We may say that we would die for Him, but what He asks is that we live for Him. Living is less hazardous, but really more heroic.

The Christian cheats his own soul out of happiness and growth by sinning. Sin dwarfs and stunts every God-like trait in our natures. Christian life

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is a development, an evolution, but sin arrests this development. It brings about spiritual disfigurement. It makes a cripple out of God's child.

It is fatal to influence. The disaster of being a stumbling-block is the disastrous effect on the lives of others. Can one be happy who has succeeded in getting himself saved, but who has been instrumental in keeping others from being saved? "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O, God, thou God of my salvation," was the cry of one of God's children who felt himself guilty of the infamy of hindering others in their approach to heaven.

Here is where we reach the heart of this question. Sin is fatal to service. Because a stumble is not a fall, we are not to conclude that we may keep on stumbling forever. The very fact that we are securely God's children should stir us to claim our privileges. The final perseverance of the saints, instead of being a permission to sin, becomes a sublime summons to a holy life. Instead of stumbling, "let us run with patience," as Paul's experience elsewhere urges, "the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." He is the Finisher as well as the Author, and His heart is set on an hour when "we shall awake in his likeness and be satisfied!"

If Christ's servant is to do this, he must give himself to his cause with a devotion that is absolute. He must be able to say with Paul: "I die daily." He must have for his cause a consecration not less splendid than that which the soldiers on the battle

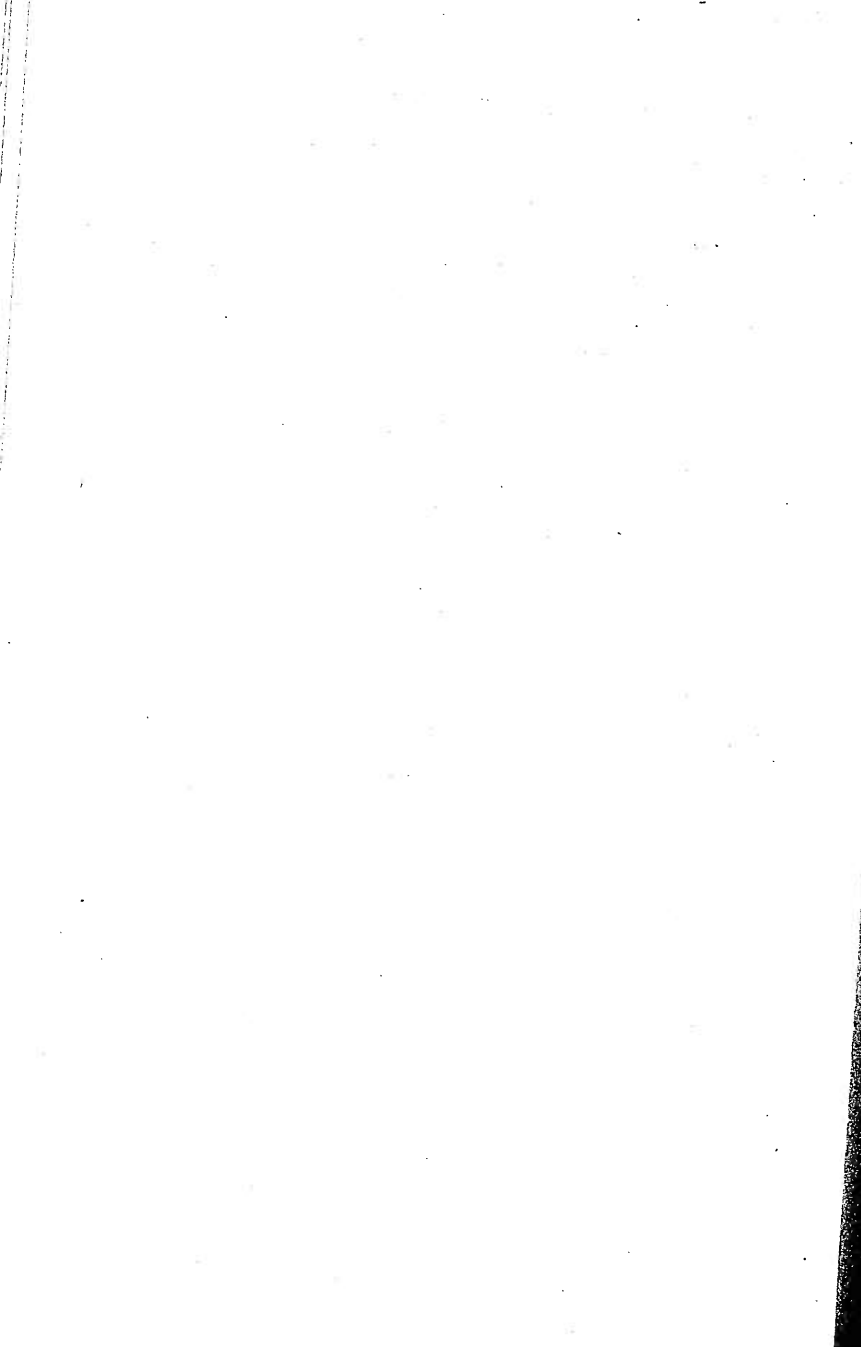
front are showing for theirs. Hear this war song which some of them sing as they go into battle:

"Blushful ray! Blushful ray!
Dewy dawn of mortal day,
Soon will sound the trumps defying,
Soon upon the red sod lying,
We shall breathe our lives away.

Joy and gloom; joy and gloom;
Woof and warp of mortal loom;
Yesternight the war steed's prancing.
Now the death shot's fatal glancing,
Next to-morrow's quiet tomb.

Calm and still! Calm and still!
Wait we now our Father's will;
Now nor death nor wounds appall us,
On to fight should death befall us,
Each a soldier's grave shall fill."

The soldier in whose blood runs the soul of that song will never be false to his flag. It is such a devotion the Great Captain of our salvation demands of His followers; and those who have it will not falter in the march nor be afraid in the stormy hours of battle. They will "endure to the end."



XII

INTERNATIONALISM — PAUL'S DOCTRINE
OF HUMANITY

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."—ROMANS II: 32-36.

XII

INTERNATIONALISM — PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY

IN giving his estimate of the type of character entrance into the Great War, a great daily newspaper carried at the head of its editorial column a picture of the American flag, and under the flag, in black-faced type, this declaration: "American lives, American money, American loyalty, for America and America only." In South America there is a society called the *Cordes Fratrees*, whose motto is "Above all nations, humanity!" The South American motto is to be preferred to the North American editorial.

There can be no doubt of Paul's nationalism. He was loyal to Israel, so loyal that he said: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."¹ He seems to say that he was willing, if necessary, to sacrifice personal salvation for the sake of national welfare. But the horizon of a servant of Jesus Christ must be as wide as humanity. Like his Master, he must carry the world in his heart. He must fling sectionalism and sectarianism and even nationalism to the winds, and think in world-wide and race-wide terms.

Paul's experience commanded such a horizon. He

¹ Romans 9:3.

is reaching the zenith of the creedal part of this epistle. He is preparing to say: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever." He cannot say that with a passion that concerns itself with the salvation of a mere segment of the race. Therefore he writes humanity into his creed, and writes: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

He takes his stand upon the world-wide platform of his Master. He espouses the cause of humanity in its entirety. This is not only a fundamental feature of Christ's teachings; it is the very center and circumference of His teachings. Jesus was an internationalist. His name for Himself was Son of Man, and in that title He proclaims His kinship with all mankind.

CHRIST AND HUMANITY

Let us examine the teachings of Jesus on this subject, and see how in this doctrine of internationalism Paul certifies the fact that his spiritual development has widened out until he thinks Christ's thoughts after Him.

Once to a group of Jews Jesus said: "Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, . . . but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."¹ They lis-

¹ Luke 4: 25-27.

tened to Him first with amazement, then with scorn and derision, then with indignation and wrath. As His meaning became clearer, they mobbed Him. They laid violent hands on Him and tried to kill Him. What was Christ's offense? He was speaking to an audience of intense nationalists, of people who said: "Above all humanity, my nation." Those Jews claimed to be God's only chosen people. They lived narrow lives, and they did so from choice. Every ritual and dogma of their religion was intended to separate them from other nations. They regarded contact with other nations as a contamination. Their world ended in the hills of their sky-line, in the lakes and rivers of their national boundary. They were provincialists who tried to tether God down to a narrow strip of earth, and make of the Almighty a Hebrew monopoly.

Jesus would widen their horizon. He would break down their barriers and introduce them to a bigger world. He intimates that they are not the only people. God is interested in other nations, also. He would rend the veil and scatter the fogs and give them a vision of God's country lying beyond their sun-bathed hills, a suggestion of the Almighty outside the pale and ritual of Israel. In doing so, He takes their two greatest prophets, Elijah and Elisha, whose names were a symbol for orthodoxy, and shows how they pushed out beyond nationalism.

He seems to say: "There were many widows in Israel in Elijah's day, widows who need a prophet's visit, but he passed them all by and honored a pagan

woman in a heathen city. He must have thought there was some good outside his own nation. There were many lepers in Israel in Elisha's day, lepers who cried for help and who longed for the healing touch of the man of God. If Jehovah was for the Jews only, why did he not cure some of his own lepers? Yet they were passed by, and the only one cleansed was an ancestral enemy from an alien race." He means that God is bigger than Israel, that He is for Zidonians and Syrians as well as for Jews, that He cares for the needy of other races, that His country is bigger than one little land of promise. He would have them shake off their provincialism, and think of others, and consider humanity.

This was not an occasional teaching of Christ. It was a message He was constantly proclaiming. God is for all. He is the God of the Gentile as well as the Jew. One day a Roman soldier believed in Him, and Christ was so enthusiastic over the man's faith that He painted a picture of world redemption when "many should come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."¹ On another day He healed ten lepers. Of the ten, but one returned to give thanks, and that one was a Samaritan,² the member of a despised race. On another day He sat by Jacob's well, and to a woman of this same despised race, Jesus revealed the great truth of the spirituality of worship, and said: "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at

¹ Matt. 8: 11.

² Luke 17: 16.

Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."¹

What is all this but Christ's emphasis on a concern that transcends national welfare? In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the hero is outside the pale. In Peter's housetop vision, the scales fall from his eyes as he exclaims: "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him!"² Then as if to climax His teaching, when the hour comes for Christ to lay the supreme duty on His followers, He does so in terms whose internationalism is unmistakable. He says: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

This was the thought that Christ was ever flinging in the faces of those narrow, proud, exclusive, bigoted, intolerant nationalists, who, had the term been coined in that age, would have called themselves "supermen." Jesus would say to them: "You are not the only people. Your rights are not the only ones that are sacred. You must be more than nationalists; you must be internationalists. You must do more than glorify Israel; you must serve humanity."

A DESPISED MESSAGE

The Jews despised Christ's message. They were, and have always been, intense nationalists. Perhaps

¹ John 4:21, 24.

² Acts 10:34, 35.

in no race on earth has this spirit been so highly developed as in the race from which Paul came. Nothing has been able to stamp out this trait in the Jew. He has endured the bitterest persecution, he has suffered the loss of everything, but he has clung tenaciously to his heritage as the offspring of Abraham. He has declined to sell his birthright, and he has visited a boundless scorn and contempt on the apostate and the renegade.

This nationalism had a holy origin. It was God's method of lifting Israel out of heathenism. A careful study of His dealings with the Jews shows at every step an effort to build barriers between them and the surrounding nations. The very country in which they dwelt was eloquent of isolation. On the south and east were the desert, on the north the snow-capped peaks of Lebanon, and on the west the great sea. Their religious ceremonies were all exclusive. It was God's method to protect them against contaminating contact with idolatrous and licentious nations and fit them for their high destiny as the religious leaders of the world.

This intense nationalism has been to the Jew at once his glory and his confusion. It has made him heroic. His devotion to his own cannot be challenged. But it has been the occasion of most of his troubles. The Jew has declined to blend with other races. Wherever he has gone, he has remained a Jew. He may be a German, but he is a German Jew; an Englishman, but he is an English Jew; an American, but he is an American Jew. He has remained the one unassimilated and unassimilatable

element of the population. This has made him an object of mistrust, and later of persecution. This is also probably the supreme obstacle in the way of Christian missions among the Jews. Their antagonism is not so much to the teachings and spirit of Jesus. Indeed, many applaud the teachings and honor Christ as a great and good man, but they feel that to become Christians is to repudiate their nation, and prove recreant to the blood which runs in their veins. Paul had to overcome all this in becoming a Christian, and the fact that at the outstart he boldly proclaimed himself as the apostle to the Gentiles is significant of the bigness and revolutionary character of his Christian experience.

IS NATIONALISM SACRED?

Was Paul mistaken in this change? Is nationalism such a sacred thing? Granted that it had holy uses when Israel was a primitive race just out of bondage, is it so to-day? Granted that it was needed when Israel was to be kept from contamination, and the divine effort was to raise up a people from whom were to come the Bible and the Messiah, is it needed to-day, when God's manifest plan is to unite all men in a great fraternity of humanity?

The question has a bigger audience. It is for Gentile as well as Jew. Is nationalism the holiest thing for any people? Is that country the greatest whose motto is: "Above humanity my own nation," that regards self-preservation as its holiest task, and national development as its sublimest achievement? Is it really desirable to be a peculiar people? Is it

great to be exclusive, to be satisfied with oneself, to erect barriers even when there is no arrogance, to insist on tribal deities in the presence of racial relations? The question is not, Is this natural? but, Is it best? Is it holy? Is it Christian? Are those nations greatest that think only of their own destiny, that sacrifice every principle and scruple to self-advancement? Or are those nations greatest which are concerned for all nations? Christ looked beyond nationalism. He declared that there is something better. He taught that the holiest bond is not that of creed or color or sect or class or caste. The holiest is the human bond which binds one not to a fraction or a segment of the race, but to all men. As a servant of Jesus Christ, Paul felt that he could not concern himself with less.

CHRISTIANITY'S CREED IS INTERNATIONAL

Christianity does not belittle nationalism. It glorifies it. But it does not stop there. Paul was not ashamed of being a Jew. He was proud of it. He was ready to lay down not only his life, but to surrender his immortal hope, for Israel. But his sympathies were bigger than one little land, and his life was laid on the altar for humanity. The greatest things are not those that can be monopolized by the few, or pre-empted by privileged classes. They are those which all men hold in common, and which are level to the reach of any life.

Internationalism is greater than nationalism, since rights are sacred not because they are national but because they are human. One nation is as sacred

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as another. Differences of color and creed and language do not affect rights. Basal needs are the same. Injustice hurts a black man as much as it does his brother under a white skin. Persecution tortures the Armenian as much as if he were a European. The horrors of war which have devastated Poland and Belgium are not easier to bear because these countries are not German or British. Great needs are not national, but racial, and basic human rights are built along the lines of need rather than of privilege.

Again, internationalism is a holier thing than nationalism because racial completeness includes all national values. Each nation possesses some pre-eminent element of merit in the human family. The Germans have their distinctive virtues, the French theirs, the British theirs. It is so with the black man and the white, with the Oriental and the Occidental; but in humanity all these national values blend and become one.

Internationalism is back of Christ's plea for unity, and of His program for missions. It is not possible to live near the cross and think in less than human terms.

The great leaders and servants of the race have been internationalists. The great prophets, whether ancient or modern, have dreamed not of a national world, not of the world of a red man or a yellow man or a white man, but of a world in which character shall reign, and where humanity shall come to its own. The great statesmen have been out not for autocracy, but for democracy. They have cham-

pioned the cause not of the classes, but of the masses. The great writers have been personalities responsive to all appeals. The great humanitarians have not been hide-bound or sect-bound or class-bound. They have felt in their veins the pulses of the race kin. The great poets have sung all moods, and pleaded for the happiness of all. How, therefore, can one be the servant of the Son of Man, and be satisfied to dwell in a smaller zone? A Christian is one who can say: "Nothing that is human is foreign to me."

INTERNATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM

We must interpret our patriotism in terms of humanity, if it is to measure up either to Christian duty or human hope.

America has been getting a new birth of patriotism in the days of world war. This must be apparent to the most superficial student of current events. All at once the nation has leaped up into a new life. The resolute, red-blooded, grimly defiant, splendidly reliant America of the present is no more the ease-loving, pleasure-seeking, profit-sharing, pacifist-worshipping, pussy-footed, trouble-shunning America of the recent past than a battleship is a jellyfish.

We have looked on at the other nations engaged in the great war, and we have been impressed with some of the blessings that have come to them. We have seen Great Britain escape threatened dismemberment and internal revolution, and become unified and solidified as never before. We have seen

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gay, pleasure-loving France that had canceled religion from its program and confiscated the churches, return once more to God's altar, and with more of a loving faith. We have seen Russia shake down a throne of autocratic power, and recall her exiles from bleak Siberia, and emerge from a reign of despotic tyranny which had made the name of Russia a synonym for oppression. We have watched Belgium. We have watched it with an aching heart and with a hot indignation against the beastly brutality that has made desolate that little land. But as we have watched the heroism of Belgium, as we have heard her leaders say that the people have no regrets for the course they have followed, as we have seen the Belgian army rehabilitate itself and become once more a fighting unit at the battle front, we have concluded that Belgium must emerge from the war immortal. As we turn from a survey of other nations to look at ourselves, it is easy to see that America is becoming a finer nation. Life is becoming invested for all the people with a more earnest purpose. We are adopting simpler and saner methods of living. We are learning to give in a sacrificial way. We are acquiring government control and regulation of national abuses. But in addition to all this, we are getting a new birth of patriotism, and this of itself is more than a compensation for the war cost.

What is patriotism? It is being true to the flag. It is being loyal to the sacred emblem of the nation's honor. And it is being this not because of what a piece of bunting is in itself, and not merely because

of the flag's associations. When one thinks of the fields over which the colors have floated, of the times they have summoned the sons and daughters of the nation to heroism, that is enough to fill us with a high devotion. But the flag stands for a country's cause. In the great war it stands for what the country fights for.

What is that? What led America to enter that world conflict?

The freedom of the seas was the primal issue. We were not willing to surrender that at the behest of the submarine raiders. It was something for which we had been contending for the past three hundred years, and we were not willing for Germany nor any other nation wantonly to violate it. Both Germany and Great Britain did violate it so far as property values were concerned, but property is a thing that can be restored. Human life, however, is entirely different, and when the first American life went down before that Teutonic campaign of butchery and piracy on the high seas, we said: "This is more than God means us to stand," and we went in.

But the issue soon widened out, and America soon found herself fighting for the right of free people to govern themselves. This is the only issue for which we have ever fought. It was the issue when our fathers fought at Bunker Hill and King's Mountain. It was the issue when the sons of the North and of the South fought the war that made the nation one. It was the issue that Dewey's guns shot into the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. And it is the

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issue for which American soldiers unlimber their guns on the French front.

The issue soon narrowed as well as widened, and America found herself fighting the thing that wasted Belgium, that murdered Edith Cavell, that fired on hospital ships, that poisoned Red Cross bandages, that killed children at their school desks and called it war, that stoops to anything and stops at nothing to accomplish its ends, and that would if it could destroy freedom and slay mercy from the earth.

These are the things for which the flag stands, and patriotism is the espousal of these things. Is it any wonder the flag is sacred?

"Here comes the flag!
Hail it!
Who dares to drag or trail it?
Give it hurrahs—
Three for the stars,
Three for the bars,
Uncover your head to it!
The soldiers who tread to it
Shout at the sight of it,
The justice and right of it,
The unsullied white of it,
And tyranny's dread of it.

Here comes the flag!
Cheer it!
Valley and crag shall hear it,
Fathers shall bless it,
Children caress it!
All shall maintain it,
No one shall stain it.
Cheers for the sailors that fought on the wave for it!
Cheers for the soldiers that always were brave for it!
Tears for the men that went down to the grave for it!
Here comes the flag!
The blue and the red of it!"¹

¹ Arthur Macy.

Patriotism, however, is more than this. It is being loyal to the national ideal, to that for which America stands not only in times of war but in times of peace, not only with her armies and navies, but with her homes and with her churches. What is that?

It is Humanity. It is the sacred rights of the people not because of color or race or creed, not because they are citizens of a big nation or of a little nation, but simply because they are people. It is that there is something greater than nationalism; it is internationalism. It is that no nation has a right to exploit other peoples for its own advantage; that no nation, great or small, is licensed by the stress of its own need for national preservation or promotion to trample on rights that are human.

This is the great American ideal. It runs in the blood of our national life. It is what we have stood for in our eras of peace, in our chapters of diplomacy, in our efforts to promote international good will and courts of arbitration, and it is what we must not repudiate in time of war, nor forget in the day of hot anger against a nation that adopts the rôle of Cain, among the nations of the earth. The Cain nation will bear the mark of shame in its forehead, but even then Christian nations must not forget that "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all of the face of the earth," nor cease to pray and strive for reconciliation.

America has been fitted in a peculiar way for leading the world toward racial unity and human brotherhood, for all nationalities have mingled in the making of America, until in our blood we hear the

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call, not of the white man or the red man or the black man, not of Anglo-Saxon or Teuton or Serb, but of humanity.

Our flag flies therefore for more than a victory over Germany, but in a deeper sense for a victory for Germany over herself, when she shall have turned with horror from the spectacle of her own frightfulness, when she shall have passed through the fire and been purged of the dross, when she shall have experienced a new Reformation and learned that deism is not Christianity and that the creed of Mahomet is not the beatitude of the gentle Christ, when she shall have listened back to Luther's day and begun to sing once more: "With force of arms we nothing can," and when she shall have discovered, not: "Blessed are the mighty, blessed are the merciless, blessed are the frightful," but "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

American patriotism is the espousal of human brotherhood. It rises above all color and creedal and national lines. "America asks nothing for herself," says President Wilson, "but what she has a right to ask for humanity itself." We must not forget this in the time of war. Only in this spirit can a victory be won that is worth while. Only in this spirit can the wasted world be rebuilt. If we are ever to see the day which sings:

"Fold the banners,
Smelt the guns,
Love rules,
Her gentle purpose runs,"

we must listen to Him Who says: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another."

Dr. Macdonald of the *Toronto Globe* is fond of telling a story about an interview of Dr. Henry Van Dyke with Lord Tennyson. As they separated, the great English poet presented a volume of his poems to his American critic. Dr. Van Dyke asked him to write on the flyleaf the one thing of all that he had written that he thought the greatest. Tennyson wrote:

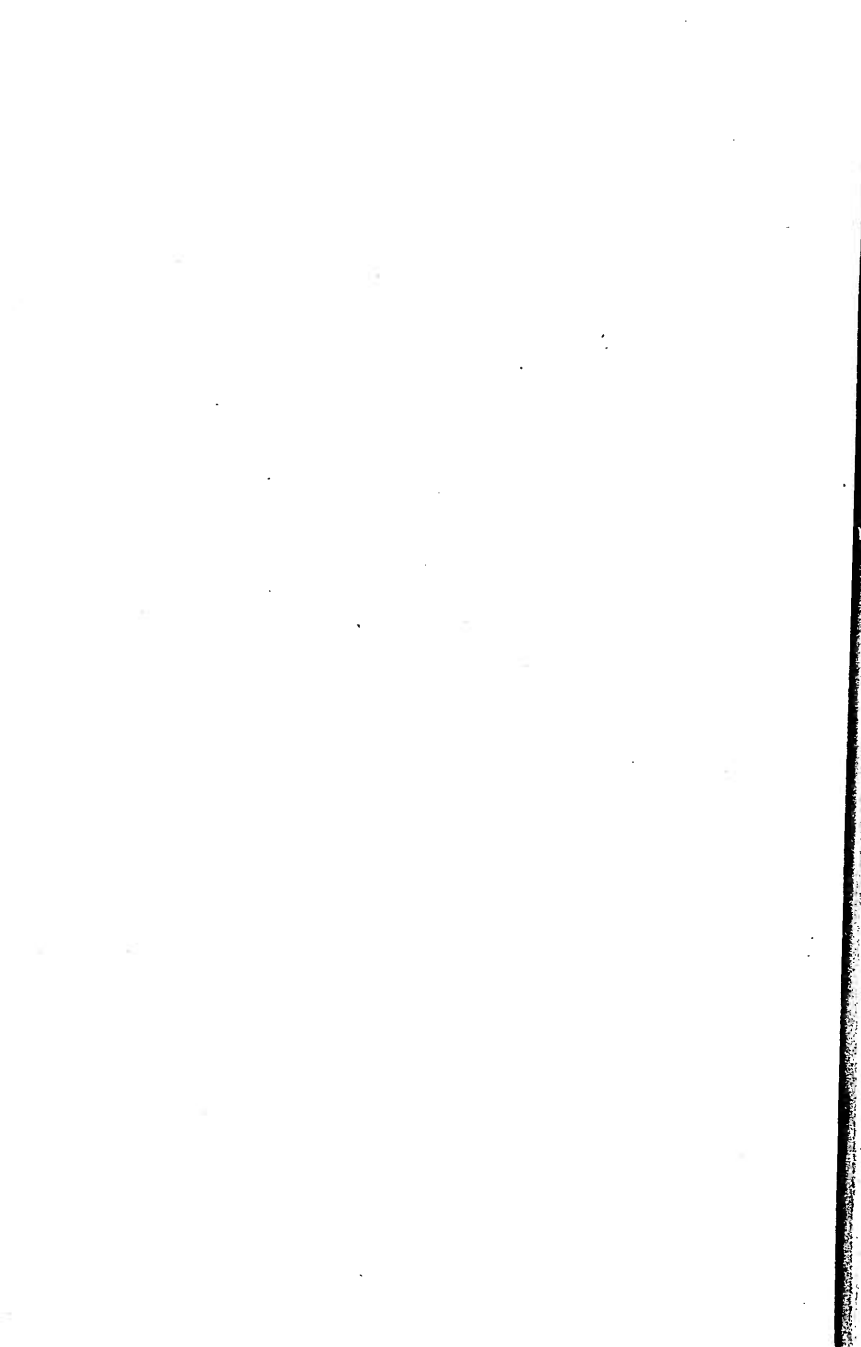
"Love took up the harp of life,
And smote on all the chords with might,
Smote the chord of self, that trembling
Passed in music out of sight."

There are two monster passions in human nature,—patriotism and religion. If patriotism is loyalty to the cause of humanity, the two are one, for both seek the same end, a world in which all men are brothers. Someone has a fancy of how the design of our flag came about. It was caught from the sunrise. Yonder along the east some bars of sullen cloud have been shot through with red fire by the rays of the rising sun. Between these are layers of fleecy mist,—snow-white,—and so we have the red and the white of the flag; and yonder is a patch of blue in which the night stars are still showing their shining faces. Thus on the sunrise, nature paints the sacred emblem of our nation's honor. It is probably merely a fancy, and yet there is a real sense in which the flag has come down to us from heaven, for the thing for which it stands is a holy

thing; it is a world dominated by the law of good will, in which men recognize that they are brothers. Hence we must keep the cross and the flag together, for they are one in their goal for humanity, and only as this goal is reached shall we have an age in which

“The war drums throb no longer,
And the battle flags are furled;
In the Parliament of man,
The Federation of the world,”

and in which society shall be sufficiently civilized to see that God's will is best, “for of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen.”



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